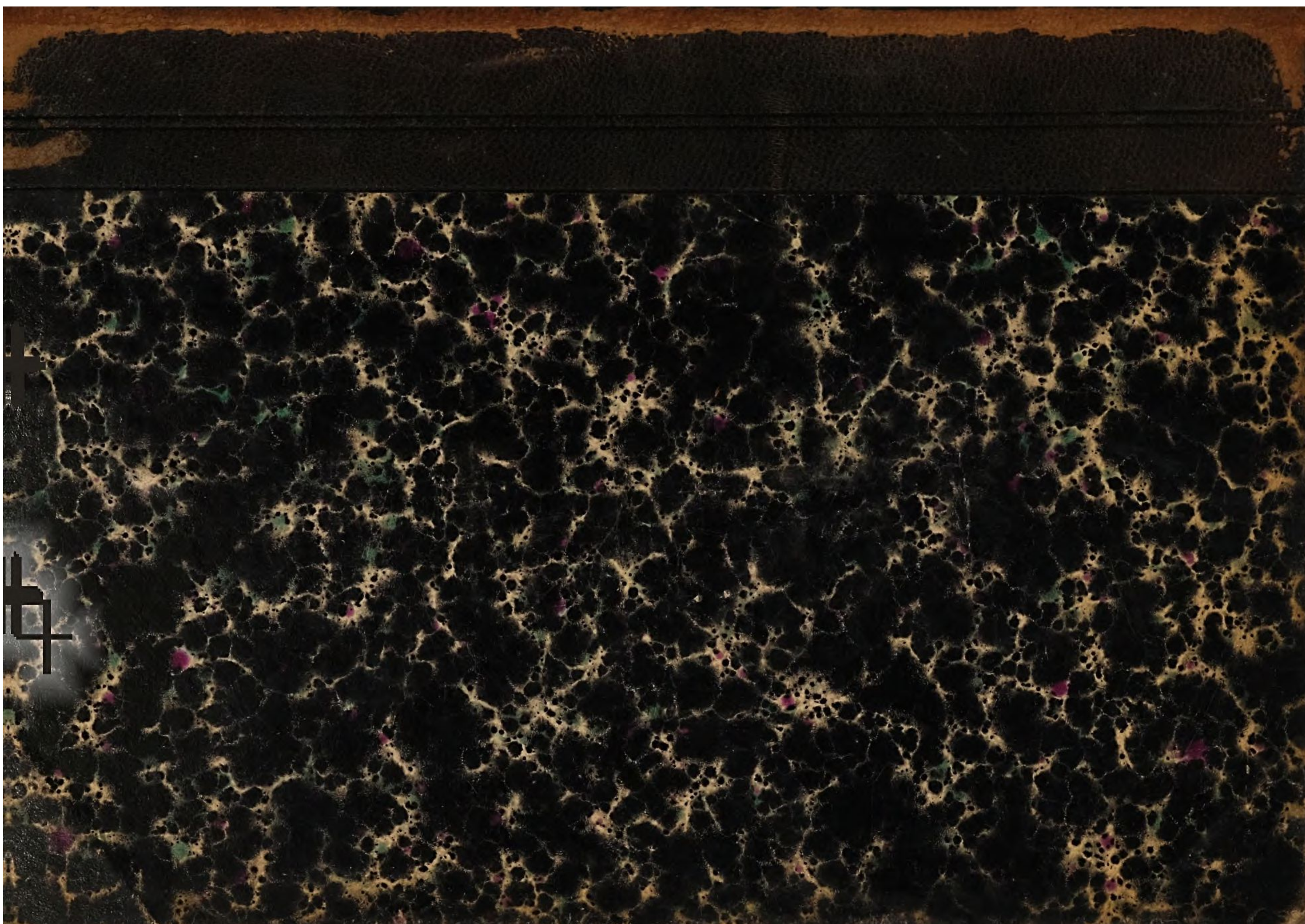

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BY

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IN ONE VOLUME.

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THE WHITE KING'S DAUGHTER

A STORY OF THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH

BY

EMMA MARSHALL,

AUTHOR OF

"UNDER SALISBURY SPIRE," "WINCHESTER MEADS,"

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Her patience rare, and most courageous mind,
By whose example we may rightly find
Of holy life and death a pattern pure.

OLD CANZONET, 15th Century.

PREFACE.

I AM indebted to Mrs. Everett Green's *Life of the Princess Elizabeth* for many of the incidents in her sad history, which are introduced into this story.

It is hardly necessary to say that Sir Jocelyn Blount is an imaginary person, with others who are connected with him at Penshurst and Norbury Manor.

WOODSIDE, LEIGH WOODS,
CLIFTON, *Easter* 1895.

THE WHITE KING'S DAUGHTER.

INTRODUCTORY.

(Showing why this History was written.)

NORBURY GRANGE—THE EIGHTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER.
A.D. 1690.

It is said that old age is the time for retrospect, and the events of a long life stand out sharp and clear in outline, when the present is but a dream and shadow-like. To the first part of this I give a willing assent as true, but scarce to the last; for the present in which I find myself to-day, after storms and sorrows which befall most men sooner or later, is so fraught with blessings that I give daily thanks to God for very real and comforting benefits.

I have been compelled to lead a quiet life, even from my youth up to this hour.

I was just turned my eighteenth birthday when

I rode out with my father to join the King's troops, and in less than a month later I was in the forefront of the battle at Newbury.

It was a sore fight. Noble Falkland—he who craved for peace—fell; the brave Sunderland lay dead, and my father by his side fell, covered with wounds.

I was hit by a bullet in the thigh, and was carried off the field, after a night of agony, and put under the care of a surgeon. He probed the wound so mercilessly that I prayed to be suffered to die in peace. The bullet was never taken out; but in the efforts to do so the bones were so injured that I have halted in that leg ever since, and all active service was at an end for me.

But this only in passing, to show how it has come about that my days have been spent in retirement, and, as may have seemed to careless beholders, in idleness. Well, this is, I hope, not quite true; there is work for cripples as well as for those sound in limb, if they knew how to look for it, and, finding it, knew how to set about to perform it.

It was on the eighth day of September of last year that I, seated by my table in the parlour of my old home, all illumined with sunshine and the golden glory of the autumn afternoon, heard a

familiar voice at the open casement calling me by name.

"Still pondering over books, dear heart? Come out and see how lovely everything looks—the air is like midsummer!"

I took my thick stick, and, in compliance with the request of my wife, went with the slow step now habitual with me to the window. The casement was open, and I looked down on the face turned up to me with a smile.

"Nay, I am content to keep the house to-day, sweetheart. Come in and bring the sunshine with you."

Time had touched my wife with a gentle hand. None can think of age when with her. There are lines on the sweet brow, traced there by many cares, and the hair drawn up from it, as is the fashion nowadays, is silvered—gold and silver threads which shimmer and ripple in the light. Slight of build and quick in every movement is my wife; never sure was any man blessed with one better suited to rouse him from melancholy moods and cheer him on his way.

A light heart lives long, and my true love is yet —ay, and will ever be, as full of life as in youthful days. Quick to love, quick to sympathise, quick, it

may be, to speak at times with undue haste, yet ever in her heart a spring of cheerfulness, nay, even of joyousness, which is unfailing.

"No, I will not spare you, Jocelyn. I will come in to fetch you—just wait."

In another minute she was at my side, drawing one hand through her arm, while I grasped my stick with the other, and so drew me into the pleasance which lies before our house.

"Yes, it was a like day to this," I said, "and hark!" for, as I spoke, the clock from the old church tower struck three, in deep, sonorous tones. "Yes, it was just such a day, forty years ago, when that brief life ended here, to enter into the life eternal. She was as a saint to me; the homage I paid her was from the depths of my heart, and I can recall her as she was, as very few are left to remember her."

My wife knew well what my thoughts were, and presently she said,—

"See, now, Jocelyn, you have written much in those big books—sift what is there."

"The wheat from the chaff, you would say?"

"Yes; for even in a barn well stacked there is ever chaff that needs to be winnowed, and it is so with your big journals, I'll warrant. There is much

that none would care to read, and much, very much, that those who come after us will love to have preserved. Set about the work, dear husband, and leave Spencer and Sidney and Dante to themselves for a space. You are a bookworm, and at times I think you forget that you were young once and marvel that our Joyce and Master Leighton should indulge in those pranks natural to their age. You always wore a sober face. I marvel that you did not shave your hair and join the Roundheads."

"This is wild talk, my wife. It is not given to everyone to be as blythe as you are when life is nearing its close."

"And is it not well that I can laugh and be merry? Sure you do not grudge me this power."

"Nay; you know full well that, far from grudging it, I prize it, and pray God to grant it to you for many a year yet."

"Do I not know it? And, think you, I would ever have changed my grave old husband for an idle, foolish chatterer. Nay, I am well content, and here comes our Joyce."

Our only grandchild now crossed the pleasance singing as she came; her figure light and airy, and her face aglow with youth and hope.

We lost our two sons in early youth, then a

daughter came to us, who was the very light of our eyes. She married very young, a somewhat gay gallant, whom we scarce approved. God took her, methinks, from much trouble when her child was born, and her father gave her over to us, and resigned all part and lot in her. He speedily married another wife, and died in foreign parts, so that Joyce was our very own.

Joyce has her grandmother's sunny temper; a little wayward, doubtless, and, as the darling of our old age, too much the object of attention. But a sweeter maiden I think it were hard to find.

"See, grand-dad!" she exclaimed, "I am bidden to London. Mistress Leighton will take no refusal. You will suffer me to go and see all the grand folk, won't you, daddy?"

I had misgivings as to the effect this plunge into the great world might have on the child. I remembered her mother's far from happy fate, and I looked at my wife for guidance ere I answered. But we had scarce time to think or reply, when Baldwin Leighton came in sight from behind the yew-tree hedge, which shut out the gate leading from the churchyard.

"You will grant me the favour I ask?" the young

man said. "My mother will take all care of Mistress Joyce."

"I can give no hasty consent. Joyce has not been bred for Court life. Such life is fraught with dangers."

"This is an old-fashioned notion, sir; pardon my freedom. Queen Mary keeps all things in sober order—too sober, by half, for some, mayhap. Your Court days in the reign of Charles the Second are no pattern for these. What say you, Lady Blount?"

"I say I will have speech with Mistress Leighton before I say yea or nay. Now, you giddypate Joyce, I want your service in the stillroom—nay, nay, no coaxing of your grandfather will avail," for I, having taken my seat on one of the benches in the porch, Joyce came and whispered,—

"Say yes—say yes, dear daddy."

Well, it came about that we did say yes, and thus it was that, in unbroken quiet for the next six months, I ransacked the records of the past, and what follows is the result. Whether or no I have winnowed the chaff from the grain, it is not for me to say; I left that for my wife to judge, and a lenient judge she proved. When my task was finished, she hastened to Tunbridge Wells to commit the sheets to

a binder there, who devised as pretty a vellum cover with gold and red lettering, as if it were to contain the poetry of Master Spenser or Sir Philip Sidney, and even William Shakespeare might be proud to see his work safe betwixt such a fair binding.

"It will be a gift for Joyce on her wedding day," my wife said, "and she will hand it down to her children," for by this time we had made up our minds that, when Joyce had passed her eighteenth birthday, we must give her to Baldwin Leighton.

"There is nought written about one passage of my life, dear heart," I asked, "to which you take exception? If so, I would sooner cut out the pages, even now, rather than vex your true, loving heart."

"Nay," was the answer, "if I had felt any such vexation, I would have told you ere this, when I read what you had written—ere I took the whole to Tunbridge Wells;" but she turned away her head as she spoke, professing to be busy examining the fair binding she had chosen for my book.

I saw her brush away a tear, and then putting her arms round me, she said,—

"I have made amends, dear heart; tell me so much."

"Amends! there were no amends to make," I said. "Chase such thoughts from your mind."

"Then, in a tone so low it was almost a whisper, my wife said,—

"It is for Joyce I have been so eager to get this book written. Which, if she may take a lesson from her grandfather's past—"

"And her grandmother's present," I added; "that is what I desire for her."

Her absence has made the old house very quiet, and I have written with no interruption. Joyce flitting in and out. Joyce showing marvellous quickness when she chose to apply to her books; swift to take up any new idea, and ready as a learner in a way that often amazed me.

Baldwin Leighton is the young squire of a parish near us, but nearer Penshurst. He has been on half-brother-like, half-lover-like terms with Joyce. His mother is a gentle woman, coming of an old Puritan family, and that is why, after many years' absence from Court, she has gone thither, taking with her our grandchild Joyce to fill, as she says, a daughter's place—that blessing being denied her.

Of late, Joyce, so ready with her pen, has not written much, and but few details of her life in London. How things stood with her and Baldwin Leighton we did not know, and anxiously we expected her return, for it was now early May, and

her absence had been prolonged for near eight months.

This is a somewhat long preamble, but it will show how an old man came to write his recollections of years gone by. Verily we spend our years as a tale that is told, and so I have said to myself a a hundred times as I have penned the history of a past in which one fair and childlike figure presents itself as prominent—the sweet daughter of him we call the White King, for whom my father laid down his life on the field of Newbury and I received the wound which changed me from a boisterous, gay gallant into a somewhat sober, reserved, quiet, and, as some might think, a sullen man.

BOOK I.

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,
Of touch or marble, nor can'st boast of row
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold;
Thou hast no lantern, whereof tales are told,
Or stair or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile;
And there, grudged at, are reverenced the while.
Thou joy'st in better marks of soil, of air,
Of wood, of water; therein thou art fair.

BEN JONSON.

BOOK I.

I SEE that, following the example of my mother and of one of whom she spoke ever in terms of reverence and affection—my Lady Leicester of Penshurst Castle—I began a diary or journal of events when I was yet a boy. At that time these records are mostly concerned with otter hunts along the bank of the river, or gallops across country, fox-hunting or rides of a more sober character, when my mother rode on horseback with me to visit some friends and neighbours at Tunbridge Wells.

The Pantiles there had become the resort of many great folk from London, and it was a pleasant variety to go thither for a few days, hear the band play, and watch the smart ladies sipping the waters and parading up and down with their beaux and gallants.

I had been sent to the Grammar School at Tunbridge, and did well at my books; but my father

removed me before I was sixteen, and what little learning I have was picked up afterwards by myself, and from the clergyman who served the little church of Norbury.

Soon I began to hear my father and our neighbours talk with some heat of the troubles which threatened the kingdom. Some of those who had been on the friendliest terms with us came no more, and ere long chief friends were separated, and houses divided against themselves. Some members of a family being fierce partizans of the Parliament against the King, others his staunch adherents. Of these last was my father, and he began to gather the men on our small estate around him, and put them through warlike exercises daily, and instruct me in the proper use of the sword and musket, and do his best to harden me by making me tramp by his side in all weathers. "For," said he, "the day is coming, boy, when we shall, mayhap, lie out in rain and storm in the open field, and bear hardships, as I hope, with a brave heart and good courage."

I longed for that time to come, and I was to have that longing satisfied sooner than anyone expected. In 1642 the Royal Standard was raised at Nottingham, and my father, at the head of his little band, set forth to join the King's forces,. following

close to my Lord Sunderland, whose wife was the lovely Lady Dorothy to whom the poet Waller has written so many verses calling her Saccharissa.

The night before our departure, I, lying awake in my little chamber, saw my mother standing by my bed. She had often done the same before, but she had mostly some word of tenderness or affection wherewith to bid me a good-night, or, it might be, a gentle reproof for some boyish misdemeanour. To-night she was silent, and I, springing up, asked,—

"Is aught amiss?"

Then, in a voice choked with tears, my mother said,—

"Amiss! Ay, boy, there is much, indeed, amiss. When a king and his subjects are at open war, God knoweth how it will end, and to Him I commend you. I would fain that your father had spared me this pain of parting, and left you with me. You are young and often headstrong; you will be exposed to a hundred temptations and dangers, and I tremble for you."

"But sure you would have me fight for the King," and then, as I now remember, made a long tirade as to the iniquity of those who dared to take up arms against the King, and were rebels and traitors.

My mother sighed heavily, and checking me in one of my outbursts, she caressed my head, smoothing back my hair, saying,—

"There are those who think they are fighting against oppression, my son. They are honest and good men, if mistaken; but I pray you take heed to your ways, nor let your wild spirits carry you out of the bounds of decorum. Pray to do God service, and pray for the peace of this unhappy country."

Then of a sudden, changing her mood, my mother bade me be of good courage and keep close to my father and to good, honest Robin, who had been the devoted servant of the family for years, and spoke hopefully of our return, full of honours, well rewarded for all we had endured as brave soldiers.

Finally, my mother knelt by my bedside and commended me to God, to bless and keep me safe. Comforted by her words, as I had before been vexed by the strain of melancholy misgivings she had poured forth, I fell asleep full of anticipations of what was before me, and sure no boy ever rode out to battle with higher hopes and actual delight at the thought of fighting for the King.

What a glamour does war shed around us ere we have come face to face with the reality!—the

reality of bloodshed and suffering, of grief and sorrow, of death and breaking of hearts which follow in its train.

The whole village assembled to see us ride out under the old stone gateway of our home. My father, with uncovered head, paused by the churchyard wall and bade those whose sons and brothers and sweethearts were following him to battle be of good cheer, and then a loud huzza broke forth and we heard on all sides,—"God bless your honour! God bless Master Jocelyn! God bless the King!"

"You will take care of Madam till I return, good people."

"That we will, I'll warrant; and any rebels coming with ill intentions will meet their deserts."

My father had bidden his adieux to my mother in the porch of the house, but the delay of five minutes brought her to the gate. Her face was pale, and her eyes heavy with recent tears; but making her way between my father's horse and mine, she reached up to him, saying,—

"I will not part with you in tears. See! I am smiling now; I am not a coward."

My father stooped down and kissed her again and again, but he could scarce utter a word, strong man as he was. His voice shook as he said,—

"Dear heart, sweetheart, farewell! farewell!—and to meet again!"

"Take heed about our boy," I heard her saying. "Keep him near your side, he is so young."

"God helping me, no harm shall touch him, soul and body, that I can avoid."

Then, as my father sat upright in the saddle and gathered the reins together, the horses curveting and fretting to be off, my mother held her arms once more to me, and I, stooping down from the steady roan I rode, felt her kisses warm on my face, and heard her say in a clear voice,—"God speed you, my son!" and the next moment our good clergyman, Master Miles, had taken my mother's hand at a sign from my father, and, as she was led away, the signal was given and the whole troop moved forward.

I dared not look back, for I feared to be thought unmanly, yet I was pretty nigh choked with the sobs I could not repress.

The story of what followed need not be told here. It is well known, and though I have it set forth at length in my book, it is to be found in the history of the time, more especially in my Lord Clarendon's history of the Great Rebellion.

I thank God that, in His mercy, my life was preserved; for, despite my father's careful watchful-

ness, and my mother's last warning, I yielded to temptation, and had, to my shame, be it said, passed a night of carouse with some young cavaliers before the great fight at Newbury.

I had been little used to wine, and even small potions mounted to my brain and made my head feel light—so that I scarce knew of what I was talking, and still less what I was doing—and afterwards heavy, as if filled with lead.

I was in the tent with some boon companions on that nineteenth evening of September—a great noise of songs and laughter and the rattle of dice, as the wine cup freely passed round, when my father entered.

"This is no time for such jollity," he said, sternly. "Come to my tent, Jocelyn, nor spend, it may be, your last hours on earth in ribald mirth and feasting."

So solemn was my father's manner that the tumult ceased as if by magic, and I, rising from my place staggered towards my father, who took me by the arm and led me away.

His voice was grave and stern, as he said, pausing on our way,—

"Hearken! those sounds come from the enemy's tents. Methinks they suit our position better than

the tumults we have just left. Alas! Jocelyn, your mother would think I had ill performed her last request."

I felt ashamed, and yet could find no words wherewith to excuse my conduct, slipping away as I had done to join the revellers. Again my father said,—

"Hark! they are singing yonder a psalm. I catch not the words, but I know they are calling on the God of battles to protect them in the coming fray. And I'll warrant my Lord Falkland, ay, and my Lord Sunderland also, are committing our cause to God. Poor boy!" my father added, as we reached his tent, "this is no time for reproaches; lie down and let Robin cover you with a blanket, for the night air is chill and you are over-heated with wine."

I lay down in the corner of the tent, too ashamed, as I say, to make any excuse.

Old Robin bathed my hot forehead and loosened my jerkin, while my father sat with paper before him writing, as I knew afterwards, to my mother. I had a vague hope that he would spare her the pain of hearing how and where he had found me, but I dared not ask him that favour.

I could not sleep. The effects of my riotous

revel passed off, and I was wide awake, though Robin, stealing away to the quarters where our little band lay, motioned to my father, as he passed him, that I was asleep.

I can recall those slow hours before the dawn now, as if it was yesternight.

By the faint glimmer of an oil lamp burning low in the socket I saw my father stretch himself by the door of the tent. He could no longer see to write or read, but he was fully accoutred, and his sword at his side ready for action.

An hour or two passed thus, when the canvas at the entrance of the tent was lifted. My father started to his feet.

"Who goes there?"

"For the King!" was the word given, and my Lord Sunderland came in. "The troops are to be marshalled on the brow of the hill as silently as may be. Are you ready, good Master Blount?"

"Ay, ready, my Lord. My men have my orders to be fully equipped and alert when I give the signal."

"That is well. It will be a victory, methinks. The enemy is well strengthened by the pikes of the London trained bands, but God defend the right! Falkland is in a low place, and is desponding. I

left him to come hither. He says he only craves for peace, but there must be a fight first before it is gained. Nevertheless, the country is in evil case. The King! well, I doubt if he has counted the cost," and then my Lord Sunderland sighed heavily, almost immediately saying,—"If I fall, good Master Blount, see to it that news is not sent with careless speed to Penshurst. My lady is in no condition to bear ill tidings. I have given orders to all my followers to take heed how the news is carried to her. Alas! my poor Dorothy, it will go near to kill her if I fall. Yet she will do her best to live for the sakes of our children and her unborn babe. Alack! my little Popet will scarce remember me."

"Nay, my Lord," my father said, "take not this gloomy view. Please God you will ride into the courtyard of the castle crowned with victory, and if we gain this battle—who can tell, my Lord Falkland's wish may be fulfilled. Take heart, my Lord!"

"Ay, that is good counsel—and now to prepare. At the first sign of day breaking, the whole army must close in battle array. Is that your young son asleep yonder?"

I was come to myself now, and, starting up, bent my knee to my Lord Sunderland.

"Keep a cool head, my boy," my Lord said,

"and never flinch in this your maiden fight. You don't look like one who would turn his back on a foe."

"I will die sooner, my Lord," I said.

"Like father, like son," my Lord replied, and then left the tent, my father holding the canvas up for him to pass out.

My father did not reproach me as I stood before him. He examined my armour, tried my sword-blade, turned me round that he might see my belt was secure, and then said,—

"Now, boy, we are ready; there is no time to break our fast, manchets of bread and flasks of wine are in the servant's keeping. It may be that the action will be delayed, and if we can snatch a morsel we will do so. Keep near me, and, for your mother's sake, may you be preserved."

"I repent, sir," I ventured to say, "of my last night's folly—forgive me and give me your blessing."

"With all my heart," was my father's reply, and in solemn tones he blessed me, then drawing his fine figure up to its full height and buckling on his sword, he bade me do the same, and we stepped out into the dim dawning of the October morning,

where our little band was drawn up all ready to march to its place in the King's troops.

My father leaped upon his horse, which, with my steady roan, stood waiting for us, and we rode at a leisurely pace to join the army.

Abler pens than mine have told the story of that fight, how the very pick and flower of our country returned again and yet again to charge the close-set barrier of pikes of the trained bands, which stood fast and immovable like a rock which storms assail in vain.

The third charge was fearsome—our horsemen reeled back amongst a shower—nay, a thick hail—of bullets.

Foremost in the charge of the King's troops rode my Lord Sunderland. I was near by when, the bullets hissing round us, I saw my Lord reel in the saddle and fall. My father leaped down to receive him in his arms, to carry him, if it might be, from the field, when, as in a horrid dream, I saw him also fall forward, pierced by a sword thrust, and the troops came on behind, forcing all before them into the very heart of the enemy.

The mad rush in the heat of battle was upon me. With bullets whistling past, knowing my Lord and my father were lying it might be dead, I rode

forward, remembering my father's words,—"Scorn to turn your back on a foe, let your wounds be all in your breast."

But soon the King's troops were repulsed for the last time, and in the *mêlée* and confusion I felt on a sudden a sharp pain shooting through me. I still clung on to my steady roan horse, and he bore me, faint as I was, beyond the fiercest of the tumult.

What happened after this I never knew with any clearness. It might be hours or days, I could not have said with any certainty, when I woke as from a trance in the low-roofed chamber of a peasant's cottage, and saw a surgeon standing over me with his probing knife, and old Robin on the other side of the pallet with a cup in his hand. As I have said, I endured torture at the surgeon's hand, and deadly swoons followed on his bungling efforts to extract the bullet. It is in my thigh now, and reminds me of its presence by sharp twinges now and again.

When at last I asked for my father, old Robin's face and quick-falling tears told me he was dead. His body was not recovered; my Lord Sunderland's was rifled and maltreated by the rebels, but my Lord Leicester came and carried it away, redeemed his watch from a trooper, and his noble heart was

buried at Althorp, where his forefathers lie in the chapel there.

It was in the chill of a drear day, late in November, that I, who had rode off a light-hearted boy by my brave father's side, returned to my home crippled for life, and with broken health and spirit.

My poor mother! Even now I can see her face of woe as she saw me helped by Robin into the hall, a ghost of my old self.

"My poor boy," she said, and putting her arms round me—for the first time, they said, since the news of my father's death had reached her—she burst into weeping, and so, with her head bowed on my shoulder, cried out aloud in the bitterness of her soul.

For many months I brooded over my condition, nor did I make any effort to rise above it. How I came to do so at last I will briefly relate. It was when the days were lengthening, in the spring of 1645, that one fair April morning a messenger rode up to our door from my Lord Leicester at Penshurst Castle, bearing a letter in his hand. My mother put her hand to her heart as old Robin came in with the letter, sealed with the great seal of the Sidney arms, quartered with the Dudleys', and the

prickly porcupine's head as the crest embossed thereon.

"Bid the messenger welcome, Robin," my mother said. "See he is well entertained while I read the letter."

"He bade me say, madam, he awaits an answer," and then Robin withdrew, casting an inquiring look at me, but I was as much at a loss as he was as to the contents of the letter.

My mother's hand trembled so, she could scarce cut the silk with which the letter was tied; then she looked at me with a sad smile.

"Why should I fear? I have no dear ones now about whom ill tidings can be brought. One is beyond the reach of mishap and pain for ever. The other lies on yon couch always near me."

For all this I could see my mother dallied ere she opened the letter, as if she feared to read what was written there.

My mother was never quick at deciphering hand-writing, and I, who had scarce cared about aught for many months, felt a stirring of curiosity to hear the contents of the letter.

"Give it to me," I said, holding out my hand for it. "I will read it to you."

"Ay, do so, Jocelyn, for I am, as you say, dull

at reading letters. Even your father's posed me at times."

Then I read as follows, for this letter, which so greatly affected my future life, is yellow with age, preserved in my journals, and lies before me now:—

"MADAM BLOUNT,—This comes to ask for your presence, and that of your son, at Penshurst Castle as soon as may be. My poor daughter, Dorothy, sore stricken, has heard from one of my Lord Sunderland's men, who, badly wounded, has only lately been fitted to travel hither, that your good husband, Master Blount, received my Lord as he fell on that bloody battlefield of Newbury, and that in this action he lost his life. My daughter bids me say she would fain see you, as she has it in her mind, and methinks, not without reason, that you may like to have somewhat done for your son—crippled as I hear in one leg, but with head and hands sound and a gift for making music on the viol, and a loyal heart to boot.

"Master Dodd, with whom we have taken counsel, is of my mind that your living with your son will do much for my Lady Sunderland, for true sympathy and a sharing of grief is a vast blessing to the sorrowful. The boy, our little Henry, is a goodly

child, and if joy can ever again awake in his mother's heart, his voice will call it forth.

"So, awaiting your reply consenting to come hither, and begging you to note well your son's welfare is bound up in this request, I rest, Madam Blount, yours, with respect, etc.,

"D. LEICESTER."

"I cannot go to Penshurst," my mother said, clasping her hands in appeal. "Nay, Jocelyn, I am not fit to enter a grand house and be stared at by a crowd of menials, who will wonder at me for being there. Yet, if, as my Lady Leicester says, it is for your benefit, you must repair thither. Robin can accompany you on the stuffed pillion saddle, and thus you can bear the journey; but for myself, my heart sinks at the notion."

"And mine also," I replied. "Think you, mother, that it is not pain and grief to me to leave you and go forth, maimed, amongst strangers. Nay, I would fain be left in peace."

Thus, after much consultation and many tears on my mother's part, I, at her bidding, took a quill and wrote, in my mother's name, to decline my Lady Leicester's proposal.

The messenger rode off with my letter, and I

thought all was settled, and dismissed the matter as far as I could from my thoughts, when, some time later, Master Dodd, who held the Rectory of Penshurst, rode up to the door on his stout grey nag, and asked to see my mother.

He was a kindly gentleman, and this was not the first time he had come to inquire for my welfare, for the news of my wound had spread in the neighbourhood.

It so chanced that I was alone when Master Dodd was brought in by Robin.

My mother was on an errand of mercy to a sick woman in the village, who, like her, was left a widow by her husband falling in the battle of Newbury, he being one of my father's band.

"It is well I found you thus," Master Dodd began. "I came on an important business. It is for your advantage that you accept my Lady Leicester's offer. Not only does my Lady Sunderland desire your presence, but she has it in her mind to do you, as your father's son, good service."

I shook my head, and said,—

"I am in no mood, sir, to see aught of the world. I must e'en spend my life in retirement, nor could I leave my mother."

"Look you!" Master Dodd said, "you cannot lie

here all your life. You must rouse yourself and, by going to Penshurst, take the first step towards usefulness."

"A cripple can scarce be aught but a burden to himself and others."

"He may be of service, even if he halts in one leg. He has his head and hands wherewith to be of use. Hearken! there are changes being made in the suite of the King's children. It is in the power of my Lady Sunderland to recommend you for a place in the Princess Elizabeth's household. It is much to be desired that all such persons should be loyal and true of heart to His Majesty, for these children are in the hands of his enemies—that is, of the Parliament. You have a good presence. You have studied much in these months of retirement, can play the viol well, and have a good voice, and a sojourn at Penshurst would be for your advantage, even if nothing further came of it. Now, be a man, and do not shilly-shally any longer. You can walk well enow with a stick, and you will find naught but kindness at Penshurst. Take heart, and do not be mistrustful. God orders our ways, and He will not forget you, whose father died in this righteous cause, and in which same cause you got your wound."

"My mother!" I said. "What of my mother?"

"My Lady will receive her also, till you make your start—if she wills. I will find her and lay the matter before her. Supposing the scheme whereby you should be one of the royal children's household falls to the ground, yet you will have cause to be glad you were thus bidden to Penshurst. The place itself teems with memories of the great and good. The children are worthy of the name of Sidney, and you can help them with their books, maybe."

Well, it all came about as Master Dodd desired, and, in the month of June of this same year, I entered the great hall at Penshurst for the first time, having ridden thither with my faithful Robin who returned to Norbury the next day, and my mother professing, at any rate to be reconciled to the idea, and utterly averse to accompany me, sent for a niece—the child of my father's step-sister, one Katharine Danby—to Tunbridge, and despatched me with her blessing. Such is the love of a good mother, that no pain or wrench of parting could hinder her from letting me depart, as it seemed, for my best welfare, as indeed it proved.

The very effort to appear less of a cripple than I was, was of benefit, and although now in my old age my limb has stiffened with rheumatism and so will remain; but in my youth and early middle age

I got about when once determined to do so with some alacrity, and save when a fit of pain reminded me of the presence of the bullet, I was in fair health.

On my arrival at Penshurst I was met by Master Dodd, who bade me follow him to a chamber, reached by a staircase from the big hall, there to wait my Lady Leicester's pleasure.

The day was one of brilliant sunshine, and the pleasance gay with flowers lay before the casement from which I looked. On the terrace, raised above it, I saw children sporting with a dog, throwing a ball after which he scuttled in hot haste to bring it back, and walking up and down the terrace, on guard of the children, was an older lady, reading as she walked. My Lady Leicester had many children, and, as I found later, my lady was ofttimes much oppressed with the weight of the family, of whom my Lady Sunderland was the eldest. I knew, like all the world, and especially the world of our native county of Kent, of the fame of Sir Philip Sidney, the most perfect gentleman and knight who had ever carried a sword, and the most distinguished scholar who had ever wielded a pen.

Since my misfortune at Newbury, the books which I had once slighted became my chosen friends.

I knew much of the "Arcadia" by heart, and here I was in the very place which, it is said, with my Lord Pembroke's estate at Wilton, had inspired the wondrous romance and filled it with people whose names are immortal. I had waited for some minutes, lost in thought, when the door opened, and instead of Master Dodd a lady entered—a young lady, very fair to look on. She stopped short at the sight of me, and stood for a moment like a fawn at bay, surveying me with large, lustrous eyes, which asked as plainly as words, what are you doing here?

I was unversed in the manners of the gallants of the time, I felt the colour rush to my face, and I advanced clumsily enough, making a bow as best I could, by bending my sound knee.

"Are you waiting to see my Lady?" was the question put to me, in a clear, ringing tone.

The shyness and awkwardness were mine—the lady seemed to be quite at her ease after the first moment of surprise.

"I was bidden to wait here, madam, by Master Dodd."

"To wait for what purpose?" was asked in the same tone.

"To see my Lady Sunderland," I faltered.

"Oh! is that it? Well, I am one of her waiting-

women, and now I think on't, I did hear a lame gentleman was coming hither, who was in the fight at Newbury, but I did not rightly catch his name."

"Jocelyn Blount, at your service," I replied.

"And Henrietta Gower, at yours," was the rejoinder, with a curtsey and a curl of the rosy lips, which had something of mockery in it. "You do not come to very jocund times at Penshurst. We are a sober set here; but, glad or gay, I must needs spin this fine thread ready for the Midsummer fair, when it will be sent to Tunbridge, to fashion some soft stuff for the little Harry Spencer, thus an' it please you, I must get to my wheel."

So saying, she tripped lightly to the casement, and soon her slender fingers were pulling the thread from the distaff, and the wheel spinning merrily with the hum which has a pleasant sound in my ears when I hear it to this day. I had never seen any one so fair to look upon, as Mistress Henrietta Gower.

I gazed at her graceful movements as if in a dream; her head set like a flower on its stalk, her neck was so slender. Her rich brown hair was gathered into a snood or cap, and a few stray locks curled on her forehead and peeped out from behind her ears. She wore a bodice of the colour of the laylocks in our pleasance at Norbury, and her short

skirt was of crimson cloth, from under which her little feet kept time to the whirling of the wheel, and now and again she sang snatches of songs, to which the humming made an accompaniment.

Presently a knot in the thread caused her to stop her wheel, and while she was trying to disentangle it, she turned her face full on me, and met my earnest and admiring gaze.

"Well, Master Blount," she said, "there are many hard knots to unravel, over and above one in this thread. Have you found that out? A pair of scissors solves this difficulty quickly," as she snipped the thread in two; "but, alack! there are some knots and tangles which stoutly refuse to be smoothed out. The world is full of 'em, and worse luck!"

I was stupid and dumb from surprise, and the strange awakening within me of what is called love at first sight.

"Well," she said, "have you lost your tongue as well as—I crave pardon, I see you have not lost a limb, as I was about to say; but tell me, how did it come about?"

"A bullet hit me hard, in the sore battle at Newbury," I said.

"Poor boy! And could the surgeons do nought for you?"

"They put me to great pain, and, methinks, that is all," I replied.

Now, I was not well pleased to be called a boy, yet the tone of pity from one so fair gave me pleasure in spite of myself.

"Well-a-day! There are worse troubles than maimed limbs. Here, in this Penshurst, we great and small folk know that much. Why," she said vehemently, "I would sooner be a soldier a hundred times than be a dependent on the bounty of other folk. I marvel you left your home, if you had one, to come hither, lame as you are."

Again a reference to my lameness, and this time I plucked up courage to say,—

"Methinks, madam, were you afflicted in any way, I should not bring it to your mind at every turn."

Henrietta laughed merrily.

"Hoity, toity! you are mightily offended, I see; but when you know me better, you will find out that I mean nought by what I say, fifty times out of a hundred."

We were interrupted now by the return of Master Dodd, who bade me follow him to my Lady Sunderland's chamber.

There is scant need for me to describe my lady's

beauty—and something beyond beauty—the charm which held many her willing slaves.

At this time, clad in her sombre widow's weeds, her face encircled by her thick white snood, which to some is a sore disguise, but to her was an added charm, defining the delicate curves of her cheeks and chin, while her eyes, dim with many tears, yet shone with a subdued light from under her pure, smooth brow, my Lady Sunderland rose before me, the very personification of fairest womanhood.

The child—who was born after his father's cruel death—was in the arms of his grandmother, while one of the youngest of the little Lady Sidneys was busy with a needle and gay-coloured silks, seated on a stool by my Lady Leicester's side.

"It is but cobble-stitch," I heard my Lady say, "See! run and play with thy sisters on the terrace, and I will unpick thy work, and it must be better done next time, mind! And now, Master Blount, let us know your story from your own lips. My Lady Sunderland has but lately heard, from one of my Lord's follower's, that your good father was in truth the first to receive my Lord in his arms when he fell wounded from his horse.

"Yes, madam, that is true, but I have scant memory of that time of horror, for I was shot soon

after, and carried off the field by our faithful serving man, Robin."

"Ah! was it so?" and now another voice said "Poor boy!"

The voice was my Lady Sunderland's, and then she seemed to rally from the depression which the very mention of that battle cast over her, and she bade me draw nearer, and let her lay before me a plan which might be for my advancement, despite my infirmity.

"We know you to be loyal to the King. We can trust you to remain so."

"Till my latest breath, madam. My father died for him, and I am ready to do so, if needs arise."

"Well spoken! and now to the business which has caused us to summon you hither. My uncle, the Earl of Northumberland, has been appointed guardian over the children of the King till these troublous times are over. He is a Parliament man, but good and true. It would seem that he is making up a household for attendance on the Princess Elizabeth and the little Duke of Gloucester; and he has made known to my mother, who is his dear sister, that he would fain surround the children with those who were known to be true to the King, and yet were harmless and powerless to plot anything

for them which would deliver them out of the hands of the Parliament. We think as our good friend and your good friend Master Dodd thinks, that this post—if we obtain it for you—would reward your father in your person for what he did on the fatal field of Newbury, dying there by my husband's side, and, like him, not counting his life dear. You are, it would seem, never like to be fit for active service, but with your love, of which we have heard from Master Dodd, of learning, and your fingers skilled in playing on the viol to discourse sweet music, you might well be in attendance on the royal children, and do your utmost to console them under heavy trials."

"Ay, poor children!" my Lady Leicester said, "heavy in good sooth. They have been bandied about like so many shuttlecocks from place to place. They have grieved sore at the death, first of my Lady Roxburghe, and now of my Lady Dorset, of which tidings have been brought to Penshurst, sent by my brother, the Earl of Northumberland, who now is forming, as I say, the household for the royal children, and is at once removing them from the town to his country residence, Sion House, where may the poor children have peace. They are brave, good children, and it makes my heart ache on one

side, and boil with indignation on the other, when I think of them—innocent sufferers for the sins of others."

"As is my fatherless babe—alack!" my Lady Sunderland said, holding out her arm to Master Harry Spencer.

"Nay, nay," his grandmother said, "he looks not like a sufferer. Was ever sure such limbs and such forward ways at one year and nine months old? See him now, how he routs with those toys, and since I put him down has never whined or pouted. But run to your mother, boy. See how sturdy on his legs, as my Algernon was!" and Lady Leicester sighed, for between her and this son there was even then a gulf which maternal love could not bridge over.

This was my first interview with my Lady Sunderland, and I was soon, as it were, but an insignificant unit in that large house, full of servants, friends and dependents, and many children. Methinks there is and always will be an air about Penshurst which makes it a different place from others of a like kind.

The halo of romance hangs over its beechen woods, its grassy glades, its sloping lawns, and thick yew-tree hedges guarding the pleasance, amidst which

the stately castle rises, hoar with age, yet untouched in its stability, steadfast and noble in every line of its massive masonry, which defies the storms of centuries to shake it, and remains a grand relic of a bygone age, with all its memories and all its hallowed links with the history of the past.

It has been my happy fate to dwell under that noble roof for many months, and on this, the first occasion, although it was only for a short space, a great change passed over me. I had, as it seemed, suddenly taken a step from boyhood to advanced manhood.

I had, at first, much to bear from questions and pity—in one or two cases, scorn at my lameness; but this last only came from the lowest born of my Lord Leicester's household. For certain it is, the nobler the race, the more careful are its scions of the feelings of others, below them, it may be, in rank, and inferior to them in attractions of mind or person.

Never was there a Sidney who forgot courtesy and kindliness to all alike, and it would seem that Sir Philip's mantle had fallen on the family of his brother's son, from the eldest to the youngest born.

My Lady Leicester, Sir Philip's mother, had prided herself on being a Percy, and might well do

so. The union of Percys and Sidneys has verily left a grand inheritance to those who come after them.

I was bidden to hold myself in readiness to obey the Earl of Northumberland's summons at a day's notice. Meanwhile, I was free to follow my own devices, which led me to wander as I liked, with my viol, in the woods and glades of the far-stretching park. The children of the house were often with me. One little lady, her noble father, my Lord Sunderland, called his Popet, often questioned me, with large, serious eyes, as to the battle where, she had heard, her father was slain. There was wonderful quickness in this little daughter, and, in good sooth, all the children were worthy of their lineage.

I frequented the beech wood, a favourite haunt of my Lady Sunderland in earlier days, when Master Waller sung so many songs in her praise. I had a quick ear for music, and it pleased me to set some of these verses to a simple melody.

I must now confess myself as deep in love, and as my mistress was coy and uncertain in her moods, I found relief in singing Master Waller's words, and yet I had never dared to declare myself as Henrietta Gower's suitor. How could I dare? I, a poor man

—poorer by the loss of one limb, for its uselessness made it as good as lost—approach one I thought so peerless and as high above me as the Queen herself.

Alack! to what strange delusions do we lend ourselves, when in the first flush of manhood.

Day by day, I worshipped Mistress Henrietta, at a distance, and if at times she would approach me, and laughingly ask me how I fared, and if I liked eating the bread of my patron, at others she would bid me take my viol and sing as she sat at her needle in the chamber where the gentlewomen and gentlemen assembled for an hour before supper, and smile at me kindly, so that I could scarce believe in my own felicity.

Well, it was felicity then, and it may be, that the worship of these idols of our first manhood is not unwholesome, tending to keep alive the chivalry of an older time in the world's history, of which the old legends of the Mort d'Arthur and Master Spenser's "Faerie Queen" make their themes in quaint but forcible language.

These early summer days passed like a dream, and I found myself dreading the summons which was to wake me from it.

It chanced one day that, as I was seated on the

trunk of a fallen tree, I sang, as I supposed, to no ears but the throstles and blackbirds, the verses which had become, as I fancied, appropriate to my condition.

"It is not that I love you less,
  Than when before your feet I lay,
But to prevent the sad increase
  Of hopeless love, I keep away.

In vain, alas! for everything
  Which I have known belong to you,
Your form does to my fancy bring,
  And makes my old wounds bleed anew.

But vowed I have, and never must
  Your banished servant trouble you,
For if I break, you may mistrust
  The vow I made to love but you."

A merry laugh from one unseen made me look round. I could see no one. I swung the viol across my shoulder by its riband, and, leaning on my stick, rose from my seat, as again and again I heard the ripple of a laugh, accompanied by the words,—

"Why so sad, Sir Jocelyn,
Prythee, why so sad?"

A parody on Sir John Suckling's oft-quoted words.

Presently one of the gentlemen of the house-

hold, for whom I felt an unreasoning hatred, came down the path between the beeches, and seeing me, said,—

"You seem in a melancholy mood—melancholy bred of idleness, methinks, unless singing love songs may be called occupation."

The hot blood rushed to my face.

"It is not the first time, Sir Evered, that I have had to brook insult from you. The more cowardly on your part, as you know full well I am unable to meet you as I would in fair fight."

"Poor boy! you think your fair face and these long love-locks win favour with a lady I could name. She is not far off; unseen, but near, she does not scruple to make merry at your expense. Now," as I clenched my teeth with suppressed passion; "now, do not get into a fury, boy; it only distorts your pretty face and mars your beauty."

"I swear," I began; "yes, I swear that I will have my revenge."

"Take it and welcome," was the reply. "I shall be proud to accept it. I shall survive it, methinks."

And now Mistress Gower let herself down from the gnarled branches of one of the ancient beeches where she had been hidden, and stood before us.

"For shame! Sir Evered, for shame! How dare you taunt a defenceless man. I wonder, for my part, the ghost of Sir Philip Sidney does not appear to cry shame on you."

"I have full strength in my sword arm," I began, "and I am not afraid."

"Peace! nor speak so foolishly, Master Blount; and you, sir," turning to Sir Evered, "may as lieve take your departure, for in sooth you are not wanted here."

How I envied the easy assurance and courtly grace with which Sir Evered bowed low, saying,—

"Sweet lady! your word is law to your humble servant," and then Sir Evered turned and disappeared amongst the trees.

"Now let us sit down; there is yet half an hour before supper, and the evening is warm. Nay, Master Blount, do not be angry with an idle gallant, who ought to be using his sword in the King's service. Forget him and his gibes, and let us have a quiet talk over affairs. I have been seeking for you to-day; you did not come to the waiting-room after dinner yesterday and I find you moping here by yourself instead. This is foolish. You are a prime favourite with several fair ladies, and you are known to have won favour with my Lady Leicester who will

commend you to the Earl of Northumberland. You ought to be as happy as a king."

Alas! what mockery to say this now with our King in such evil plight.

"You know well enow, madam," I said, "that it is you who are the sovereign, and I am but your humble subject at your feet."

"Nay, what folly!" she said, turning off as she ever did anything which might be interpreted as a serious protestation. "Nay, this is nonsense; let us come to other matters which are more important, and concern you and me alike."

"I crave pardon for one moment," I said. "Has yon insolent gallant won your especial favour?"

"Oh! he is well enough, but sure we have done with him now. What I would fain tell you, if you will hearken, is, that I am chosen out of the ladies-in-waiting on the Countess of Sunderland to be one of the Princess Elizabeth's household."

I could scarce contain my joy as I heard these tidings.

"That is indeed good news!" I said, and I think the story of my fervent love must have been written on my face, for Mistress Gower dropped her eyes on the ground, and began to make patterns on the

bronze carpet of fallen leaves with the point of her slender foot.

"Well, I am not so sure whether I think it good news," she said. "It has come about simply because my lady wants to make room for a chit of a girl whose father was wounded at Newbury. All my Lady's will and pleasure turns upon who has or who has not any connection with my Lord's death. It is to this you owe your place here, and I the prospect before me. Old Goody Brownson is to form another of the company also—a dull, irascible old creature—and this is her ladyship's easy way of despatching her, with orders, I doubt not, to look after me and see I behave with due decorum. I am not in favour with my Lady Sunderland and, to speak the truth, methinks money is scant here at Penshurst, and it is as well to lessen the household, there are so many hangers-on who eat the bread of idleness.

"Like myself!" I said.

"Tut, tut! Why do you always look out for offence when none is meant? You will never push your way in the world, if you go about with a melancholic, injured air."

"There is no offence taken when plain truth is spoken. I shall crave leave to return whence I

came. I have my own home—a humble one, it may be, but it is my own; and I have a mother there who loves me, and—"

"Now, I think you are a fool to speak thus; what if I say I desire your company, and that I would fain have it in this new start I am to make, by taking a place in the household of the poor children of the King. I say, 'Come with me to Sion House,' for I hear it is there my Lord, the Earl of Northumberland, has fixed the Princess Elizabeth's and the Duke of Gloucester's abode for a time. Now, sure you cannot refuse *me* a boon when I ask it."

Refuse her! Nay. I then and there bent my knee before her, poor lameter as I was, and seizing her hands, covered them with passionate kisses.

"Will you love me?" I said. "Is it possible? If it is—"

"Nay, I said naught about love," was the answer, as she drew her hands away. "To speak true, I have no great faith in love; it comes and goes, and, even if it lasts, it becomes humdrum and dull. But all the same, I like friendship, and I daresay," with a laugh, "I like flattery and pretty speeches, and love ditties. So, now, let us turn to the castle; the

big bell has begun to boom out, and supper will be served."

"One word! one word more!" I cried. "Do you favour Sir Evered Pole?"

"Nay, I will answer no such silly questions. Why, Master Blount, two weeks ago you had never set eyes on me, and, two weeks to come, you will find, may-hap, another fairer than I, and you will sing love ditties to her, and praise her beauty. Come, let me give you my hand to help you to rise, and then let us away."

I scrambled to my feet in an ungainly fashion enough; but I rejected the hand stretched out to help me, giving my thigh a horrid twinge of pain as I regained an upright position in a somewhat undignified fashion.

My pale face and smothered cry of pain made Mistress Gower say,—

"You should not have been too proud to accept help. Poor boy! I see well enough you have hurt your leg, and are fit to swoon with pain," and her voice expressed real concern.

"I am not fitted for what I have consented to undertake. I shall crave leave to return whence I came; it was folly ever to have thought otherwise," and then I said no more.

Tired in mind and body alike, I limped along by Mistress Gower's side, angry, ashamed, and yet loving her still.

When we reached the big gateway, the bell was booming its last strokes, and as we crossed the courtyard, we heard the clatter of feet and the hum of many voices, for the household was gathering for supper in the big hall.

At the raised daïs at the end of the hall, as we entered, I noticed there were two strangers—one on either side of my Lady Leicester—and, as I found afterwards, they had come from the Earl of Northumberland to say we were to set out for Sion House, Isleworth, as soon as might be, for the Princess Elizabeth would be established there by the end of the week.

I sought Master Dodd the next day, for it was by his advice I had come hither.

"I would fain be excused," I said. "I crave permission to return to my own home."

"And end your days in indolence. You, at twenty, with probably a long life before you."

"I pray God it may be short," I said.

"A coward's prayer. Nay, Jocelyn, you must quit you like a man, nor sink down at Norbury Manor to compose verses, and fill your head with

romances and idle dreaming while you brood over your wound. I would fain see you more of a man; and this place, unsought by you, in the household of the King's children, may open out to you a career of usefulness. My Lady Sunderland and her good mother think they are requiting your father's service by this means. You cannot be so ungracious as to refuse what is offered."

I was silent, and I felt somewhat ashamed of myself.

A dreamer of romance—idle, and taking my ease! Well, what of it?

It was plain I could not win favour with other men—witness Sir Evered Pole's evident hatred; witness the many covert sneers I had to bear, the many slights, as I deemed them, forced on me; witness, worst of all, that I had been a fool to pour forth my love on one who only treated me as a boy—pitied me, forsooth, and maybe laughed over my folly with her companions.

"Hearken, Jocelyn Blount!" Master Dodd said, after waiting for me to speak as all this was passing in my mind. "You are weak-hearted—mind, I do not say weak-minded. We pray for such in the Litany, and I will name you as one when I pray."

I could not do other than thank Master Dodd;

for, after all, what right had I to expect such kindly care for me from him? I left him vowing I would think no more of Mistress Gower—that I would not so much as look at her—that I would trample down my folly in presuming to love her—that I would—

Alack! how vain are such resolves. As I opened the gate leading from the Rectory garden to the park, I met Mistress Gower. She stopped me as I tried to pass her.

"Master Jocelyn," she said in her most bewitching voice. ("Jocelyn"—she had never called me by name before!)—"I am sorry, for I fear I grieved you sore yester evening. See! I want to be forgiven."

And extending her hand to me with a sweet look of compassion in her lovely eyes—what could I do but kiss it, as I held it in mine and murmured,—

"I am your humble and true servant for ever."

The preparations for our departure were carried forward, and we were to pass Norbury on our journey, which had to be undertaken on horseback, Madam Brownson on a pillion with Mistress Gower, and I on another, with an attendant and groom following. This mode of riding was one of the humbling lessons which

my infirmity brought me to learn. I had a great desire to see my mother before I set out, and asked and obtained permission to stop at Norbury for one day and night on my way to Isleworth, joining the rest of the party by the gate of Norbury Church leading to the highway to Tunbridge Wells, by noon on the following day.

I had only been one fortnight away from my home, and it seemed longer than half my previous lifetime. Old Robin was in the garden when I rode up. He threw down his spade and came towards me as fast as his legs could carry him.

"Lor' 'a mussy, Master Jocelyn, what's brought you here? I am mighty glad you are come," and then he began examining the horse with a critical eye, and the servant bearing the badge of the Spencers on his arm with a somewhat scornful attention.

I had learned to be fairly agile by this time, and soon let myself down from the pillion, saying,—

"See to it, that horse and man are well cared for, Robin."

I went towards the porch of the house, and entering, turned into the parlour on the right hand, where I had spent so many quiet hours with my viol

and my books. When I first went into the familiar chamber, I thought it was empty.

"Mother!" I cried. "Mother!" and then a person who had been concealed in a recess formed by the square, projecting lattice came forth and said,—

"Art thou my Cousin Jocelyn?"

"Yes. And you, little mistress?"

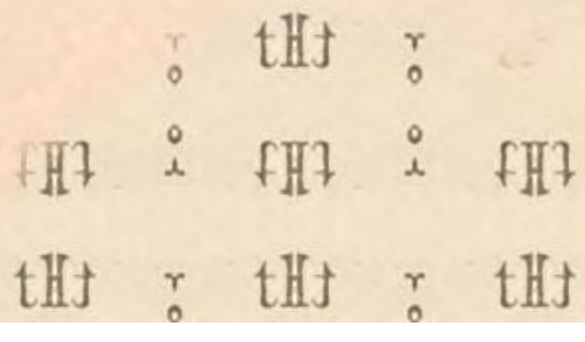
"Why, I am thy cousin, Katharine Danby. I have come hither that my aunt may feel less lonesome. Now thou art come home, I suppose I may e'en go back to Tunbridge."

"I am not come to stay beyond the morrow; I am on my road to Richmond."

"To Richmond! but I must run and find my aunt; she will be vexed if she loses a moment of thy stay here."

I had not seen Katharine Danby since she was a young child. She was the daughter of my father's step-sister, who, being left a widow, married secondly an ill-tempered man, who treated neither her nor her child with any kindness.

We had but little communication, my father expressing his disapproval of his sister's second marriage. Knowing the character of the man she wedded, a coldness had come about, and we rarely



met. I was taken by surprise when the little maiden I had last seen, of scarce ten years old, stood before me, transformed into a tall young woman.

Katharine had none of the gay, rich dress which so heightened the beauty of Henrietta Gower. Her step-father was a rigid Puritan, and insisted on his wife and her daughter wearing the plain garments which these good people wore as a sign of their severance from the world.

My cousin Katharine, on this June day when she appeared to me as a grown woman, albeit scarce sixteen, wore a plain, dun-coloured bodice with a linen kerchief crossed over her breast, her hair hidden, or nearly hidden, by a thick white cap, the sleeves of the bodice long, with some stuff at the cuffs like the kerchief.

Her outward appearance impressed me the more, as I had been in the company of late of those who wore rich brocades, with much ornament of the head, their gowns trimmed with costly lace, their hair in curls on the forehead.

My cousin was leaving the parlour when I said,—

"Wait one moment, that I may look at my new cousin."

A roguish smile broke over her serious face as

she said, using the plain language which went well with the plain dress,—

"Thou art welcome to see what there is to be seen, Cousin Jocelyn," and with the smile a faint rose-tint came over her pale cheeks.

Then, with a little nod of her head, she left me to myself for a few minutes, during which I tried to make up my mind as to whether she was fair or plain, and thinking that my mother was fortunate to have her to cheer her solitude. My mother was abroad on one of her errands of mercy, and Robin's wife, the only serving woman in our little household, presently came in to bid me welcome.

Old Ursula scanned my face narrowly, saying,—

"You look well, and the mistress will be glad. She has fretted, I can tell you, and she'll fret more afore she has done."

"I go to please her," I replied. "She ought not to fret."

"Ay, that's her way. She'll come in now, I'll warrant, with a smile for her boy, and pretend she is highly pleased you have this grand place at Court, and then she'll lie awake crying half the night, and be angry on the morrow if I ask her if she has a pain in her head, though I know well enow the pain is in her heart. Well-a-day! it's hard on humble

folk when there's nought but quarrelling and fighting about our lawful King. Shame on them, say I, who go against him. But I mustn't stand chaffing here—there's my fine gentleman in the kitchen to feed. He thinks a mighty deal of himself, he does! —more than other folks think of him, mayhap."

"This Cousin Katharine of mine, Ursula—how does she suit my mother?"

"Oh! pretty fairly; but I hate the Quaker nonsense. I am ready to tear off her cap, fit for a woman of fifty odd years. When it's off, her hair is just a marvel. She won't go to church with the mistress any morning, but we'll have her casting off these ugly garments ere long—there's no meeting-house handy."

"The gown suits her. She is like one of the soft grey pigeons puffing out their feathers on yon wall," I said.

"Ay—ay, she ain't so soft as you think. She has got a will and a sharp tongue, and speaks up when she has a mind. No, no, don't fancy her a soft, easy-going lass," and laughing somewhat scornfully, Ursula toddled away.

That was a bitter-sweet meeting with my mother. I knew full well, without Ursula's hints, that she put on an appearance of satisfaction at what she called

my good fortune, building on it many hopes of my advancement, and saying how many might envy me, taken into favour with the Countess of Leicester and my Lady Sunderland, her daughter.

That evening the good old clergyman, Mr. Miles, came to supper, summoned by my mother. He talked of things that were passing in the country as news, while I had heard of them at Penshurst days before. We discussed the position of affairs, being stout Royalists, and yet many acts of the King were, even in the eyes of those who loved him best, scarce to be reconciled with perfect honour.

My Cousin Katharine sat plying her needle with great dexterity after the board was cleared, and never spoke, but now and again she gave a little impatient pat with her foot and a shrug of her shoulders.

It was a fair summer night, and after Master Miles had departed, I strolled into the pleasance shut in by high walls on two sides, and open, as I have said, to the road skirting the churchyard wall on the other.

The tap of my stick was not heard on the smooth turf, and I, thinking I was unobserved and alone, seated myself on a bench and began to hum softly

to myself some verses which I had composed as an expression of my love for Mistress Gower.

Very weak and poor these verses seem to me now, nay, foolish, if not fulsome, in the words with which the beauty of my lady-love was extolled.

But though I can look on myself, the self of those times, with a sort of wondering pity which is half sadness, half amusement, I know that, if foolish, I was sincere in my folly, and if, as I now think, mistaken in the perfection of her, thoughts of whom filled every minute of my life, sleeping or waking, I was as truly in earnest as ever was a lover of scarcely more than twenty summers.

When I had repeated the last line of my song, lingering on it as if loth to leave it, I became aware of a presence near by.

I turned, and in the soft summer twilight I saw my cousin was leaning against a tree not far from me. In the faint light, her white cap and kerchief shone out so that she looked somewhat eerie and spirit-like.

"Come and sit by me," I said, "and let us have a talk, that we may know each other, as befits good friends and cousins."

She answered my summons by taking the place by me on the bench.

At that moment a nightingale burst forth into a rapturous song in the lime-tree shadowing the wall on the side of the churchyard.

"That song recalls thine," Katharine said.

"Did you hear my outburst?" I asked.

"Did I not?" she replied with the same low laugh.

"Who is the fairest of the fair,
With dusky, chestnut hair,
And eyes—"

"I cannot remember any further—help me."

"No," I said, "the rest is not worth recall, if you have forgotten it,"—then, in a somewhat abrupt fashion, I turned the subject to my mother, saying, —"I am right glad you are come to be with her. She would have been lonesome without a companion, and I hope you will stay with her till my return."

"When will that be?"

"I cannot say—I have to obey orders; but, be my absence long or short, I may fain hope you will make your home here. You have no cause to love your step-father."

"No; but he is my mother's husband, though, to speak plain, the children she has borne him are dearer to her than I am."

"I should like to think of you as a sister, Cousin Katharine," I said. "I have ofttimes thought how happy I should have been had my little sister, lying in yon churchyard, lived—and been my friend."

"Mayhap you will find your friend in her of the dusky hair and—"

"Friend!" I repeated. "Friend! Nay, if she listens not to my soul."

"Then you are her suitor—accepted suitor?"

"That is an unanswered question; but, meanwhile, I am content if I can but see her and breathe the same air as she does."

"Ah! all that is beyond my understanding. One, Josiah Pratt, came to my mother's after one Fast Day meeting, and said as he sat in silence there, it was borne in on his mind that I was to be his wife. It was borne in on mine to the contrary, and he said no more than that the ways of the Almighty were not to be understood—and so it ended."

"I am right glad to hear it, cousin," I replied. "Sure you are not fitted to be wed to a strait-laced, whining Quaker."

"Thou must, please, not speak thus of my people. Many among them are unlike Josiah Pratt, and I love their quiet meetings and gentle manners. Now, fare-

well, cousin, for it is time to be abed." She was nimble on her feet, and I was slow. She reached the porch before me, and then, having waited till I came near,—"I wish to say I will stay with my aunt as long as I can be of service, unless my mother needs me at home."

"I thank you for these words," I said; "and should anything here happen which I ought to know?"

"I will inform thee of it by letter. Fare thee well," and then she disappeared in the dim shadows of the hall.

We were to be ready to start the next morning, and my horse and attendant were waiting for me to mount by the block in the yard by ten of the clock.

The sun was shining in a cloudless sky on that fair June morning, and as in a vision I see before me now the two figures of my mother and Katharine, who stood together under the antique gateway, watching till the signal should be given to us to join the rest of the party who were to come from Penshurst.

I had taken my seat on the saddle. Lady Sunderland's groom stood at the horse's head, to mount to his place when the sound of horses' coming feet should be heard.

Old Robin, leaning on his stout stick, stood apart, and Ursula, with a kerchief tied over her head, at his side.

Presently we were joined by our good clergyman, Master Miles, but very little was said.

My thoughts were busy with that other morning, when, strong and sound in limb, I sat upright in my saddle by my father's side, proud to be riding with him to fight for my King and my country.

Now, what was I but a lame thing, obliged to sit as a woman would sit on a pillion with a servant, and to bear, as I did not doubt, gibes and pity almost worse than gibes from the servants and household of the Earl of Northumberland.

The horse pawed the ground and lashed the flies with his tail, bowing his head and making the chains of the bridle jingle. Overhead a rook sailed with a melancholy caw, and our old pointer Trim lay by Robin's side, his panting breath adding another sound to break the stillness of the hot morning.

I daresay my face, as I thus sat, betrayed somewhat of my sorrowful thoughts, for my mother stole up to the side of the horse, and, striving to be cheerful, said,—

"You will love to serve His Majesty's children, dear son?"

"Poor service is it that I can render," I replied.

"Nay, no service is poor that cometh from the heart," a voice said near.

It was Katharine's voice. I turned and found she also had drawn near. She looked up at me smiling, and putting her hand into my mother's arm, she said,—

"We shall do well enow without him, Aunt Mary."

"I do not doubt it," I said; "but that does not hinder me from wishing I could stay with you."

"Nor see her of the dusky hair," Katharine said, with a little, low laugh, which somewhat provoked me.

My mother looked up at me inquiringly.

"What is it she says, Jocelyn?"

"Nought of any moment," I replied, but I felt the hot blood rush to my face, and I turned toward Master Miles, asking him to see that my mother was well cared for in my absence.

And now the sound of horse hoofs were heard, and a servant, bearing the badge of the Spencers on his sleeve, rode quickly up.

The man in attendance to me gathered the reins

and mounted to his seat on the pillion saddle. The groom also had ridden up with orders for us to fall in on the further side of the church. But before we could start, a pretty grey palfrey came ambling round the corner, and seated on it was Mistress Gower.

"We have come to pick up the truant," she said in her ringing voice. "Say, Master Blount, are you ready?"

I doffed my hat, and replied,—

"At your service, madam."

How beautiful she looked in a riding-coat of dark blue velvet, and a little cap with a long plume, set on the masses of her hair, shining in the sun as the glossy chestnut shows when the husk cracks and displays the nut within.

"Commend me to your mother, Master Blount," Mistress Gower said, "and to your sister, maybe," and then, with wondrous grace, my fair lady bowed her head. "And I wish your son God-speed in his departure; and you, madam, patience to support his absence." Then, with one of her most bewitching smiles, she turned towards Katharine,—"The same good wishes to his sister."

"I thank thee," Katharine said, bowing her head, for courtesy, or any show of deference to

superiors, were forbidden to the people called Quakers; "but you mistake—Jocelyn Blount's mother is my good aunt."

"Ah!" and then I could but notice that my fair lady scanned Katharine's face with attention.

But now a loud, harsh voice was heard, as Madam Brownson rode up, jogging on a pillion saddle, with the serving-maid who accompanied the gentlewomen of our party.

"Am I to tarry all day in the broiling sun, Mistress Gower, while you chatter here? Forsooth, I am ready to drop from the saddle as it is."

"Melt rather than drop," Mistress Henrietta replied with a laugh. "Poor dear old Goody!"

"Hold your tongue!" the old dame said in wrath. "You think yourself vastly witty, but you won't find me putting up with your sauce," and Madam Brownson mopped her round fat face, which did in good sooth look as if it was melting away.

But now the horses pawed the ground, and Mistress Gower's palfrey pranced and curveted, there could be no longer delay, and we started on our way.

At the corner, by the churchyard wall, I turned my head, and there, under the old gateway, I took

a last look of my mother, with Katharine at her side.

I waved my farewell, but Katharine made no answering sign, and I saw my mother cover her face with her hands, and turn sorrowfully away.

BOOK II.

Her angel's face
As the great eye of Heaven shinèd bright,
And made a sunshine in a shady place.

SPENSER'S *Faëry Queen.*

BOOK II.

1646.—I find I have many details of this, my first year of service to the Princess Elizabeth; but were I to set down here all that seemed to me of great importance, I should risk, and justly, the charge of filling these pages with matters too insignificant to record.

But it is now my intention to set forth as best I can the position of these royal children from the time when I arrived at Sion House, and was enrolled as a member of the Princess Elizabeth's household.

My Lord of Northumberland granted us an interview separately, and when my turn came I was greatly disturbed in mind, for methought, it may be that my infirmity had not been clearly understood. My Lord was seated at a table with papers before him when a servant ushered me into his presence.

"Ah!" he said, quick and short, "are you one Jocelyn Blount?"

I bowed and said,—

"That is my name, my Lord."

"Speak up, boy! My good sister, the Countess of Leicester, has sent you hither. Your father fell at Newbury, being one of the band of Kentish men who fought for the King, and you were wounded there?"

"That is so, my Lord."

"Well, I see," turning over a letter which lay by his hand, "my sister speaks of you as a likely lad to wait on the Princess Elizabeth. You can sing and you love learning. I hope it may prove a wise decision on my sister's part. Anyhow, we will see how it fares with you. I wouId fain give you a warning to be careful of your ways and words. These children, the Princess Elizabeth and the little Duke of Gloucester, are in the keeping of the Parliament until such time as the unhappy divisions which are rife are healed. While I order and require that all the attendants and suite of the Princess and Duke should treat them as befits their royal birth, I am pledged to the Parliament to keep them safely from the hands of those who might rashly desire to aid their escape."

These words gave me the first information I

had received that the royal Princess was in fact a prisoner.

"Do you take my meaning?" the Earl said.

I could only bow in reply.

"Then you understand, you are here as pledged to observe silence as a partizan on either side, nor are you to give uncalled-for opinions. You are to be in all things respectful, and full of deference to the Princess. You will find her of extraordinary gifts of mind for her age; and as, I see the Countess says, you are skilled with the viol, and can sing thereto, you may lighten many an hour that would otherwise hang heavily. You will obey all instructions, and exercise due caution. The Princess is often ailing and weakly. She merits all possible sympathy and consideration, for her attachment to her father, the King, makes this separation hard to bear. It is my desire to soften the pain of that separation as far as is consistent with my duty to the Parliament, nor can I forget that I owe to the King much affection for his friendship in days past, and bitter is my regret that now I am bound by the dictates of my conscience to range myself on the side of his enemies. Nay, as far as I am concerned, the word enemy is misplaced. I only pray God that the time may come when, the rights of the people

fully recognised, I may see the King in his lawful place again, as head and ruler of the kingdom."

I listened to all this with amazement. I could not reconcile the notion of my Lord keeping the royal children in guard for the Parliament, and yet holding the King in such evident affection. Such conflicts between duty and old allegiance were common, as I afterwards learned, and thus came to judge both sides more leniently than I at this time thought possible.

"You can withdraw now," my Lord said. "The governor of the household will point out your duties, and show you what chambers you are to inhabit."

As I passed out into the ante-room I saw, to my surprise, Sir Evered Pole waiting there for an audience with my Lord. He had left Penshurst before I left it, but I had not thought he would be again, for the second time, in the same household.

I was preparing to give him the ordinary greeting which courtesy demands, when, to my surprise, he stared at me blankly, as if he had never seen me before, and passed on.

I was not at a loss to know, as I thought, what had brought him hither, and my feelings towards him where scarce more friendly on this account.

We had arrived at mid-day from the last stage

of our journey. It was now towards evening, and the supper hour drew on.

I received orders from one of the gentlemen of the household to repair to the presence of the Princess with my viol, after supper, when she was surrounded with ladies who were appointed to be in attendance.

The supper was served in a separate chamber for the royal children. In no way was the respect and devotion due to them, as children of the King, forgotten.

And it is a consolation to all who loved the Princess to think how well my Lord, the Earl of Northumberland, fulfilled the trust committed to him, and while keeping faith with the Parliament, never lost sight of his duty to the children of his old master.

When I was summoned to the presence of the Princess, I found her seated in a chair, well cushioned and with a stool on which her little feet rested.

She was at this time ten years old, but she looked far older than her years, by reason of the extraordinary powers of her mind.

The lattice of the large bay window was open,

and the flowers in the pleasance sent up a sweet fragrance.

The Princess's eyes were fixed upon the evening sky with a wistful gaze, and my Lady Northumberland had twice tried to attract her attention before she turned her head to look at me.

"Begin to play," my Lady the Countess said, "some cheerful strain—not a sad ditty."

I ran my fingers over the viol, and then little Prince Henry came running towards me. He was full of curiosity to see how I made the music, and presently, pointing to my shrunk leg and the stout stick which I had rested against the back of the chair, he said,—

"Are you lame? Why is your leg so crooked?"

Then for the first time I heard the Princess's voice.

"Nay, Henry, be not so discourteous; it is not like a true gentleman to take notice of infirmity."

The child laughed.

"I am glad I have not a crooked leg," he said, and then, seizing my stick, he cried, "I will ride a cock-horse with this, sister, and go off to find the King."

The Princess smiled sadly, and said,—

"Alack! Henry, that would be a long ride;" and

then one of the ladies, at the command of the Countess, took the little Duke by the hand, and bade him wish his sister good-night, for it was time for him to be a-bed.

The Princess, when he ran up to her and threw his arms round her neck, kissed him again and again, and whispered something that I could not hear. But I gathered what it was when the little Prince came to me, and bowing with courtly grace, said,—

"Here is your stick, sir, and I crave pardon if I was rude," and then he took the lady's hand and went gaily to his bed.

"Come nearer," the Princess said, "and tell me who brought you hither."

"I told you, dear Princess," Lady Northumberland said, "that Master Blount's father dying for the King at Newbury, my niece Dorothy, Lady Sunderland, was full of desire to requite his father's service that day to her Lord, as well as to the King, by kindness extended to the son of the good man who fell at Newbury, and who was sorely wounded in the fight."

The Princess seemed satisfied, but she said,—

"Is it to show great kindness to send him hither?

I fear me there is but small chance of any gain or reward for Master Blount."

"Madam," I said, "I need no reward; and, if I did, I have it in being permitted to serve your Highness."

"Well spoken!" Lady Northumberland said approvingly; "and now tune up and let us have some music before the Princess retires to rest. She has not fared well to-day," Lady Northumberland said, gently smoothing back the curls which clustered on the Princess's fair brow. "The pain in her head has troubled her."

The long, loose ringlets lay upon her shoulders —fair ringlets, which were confined by a blue snood. Her form at this time was that of a child, but the sereneness of her face was even now almost that of a woman.

Verily, even in these first ten years of her life, she had seen and heard enough of trouble to make her thoughtful beyond her years.

In obedience to my Lady Northumberland's command, I played a gavotte and minuet which I had heard while at Penshurst played on the harpsichord by Lady Lucy Sidney.

The Princess seemed to like the music, and beat time with her foot upon the stool.

"And now, I pray you, sing," she said, "if, indeed, you have a voice."

It cost me somewhat to comply, for I knew but few songs save those I had strung together myself—rhymes, mayhap, with little reason.

I was hesitating when my Lady Northumberland was summoned from the room, saying she would bid a lady to take her place.

The lady did not appear immediately, and thus I was left alone with the Princess.

"Well," she said, with a smile, "have you no ditty ready? It will suit me as well if it is sad, nay, better, and you know a certain Master Byrd has said,—

"'Since singing is so good a thing,
I wish all men would learn to sing.'"

I had never heard of Master Byrd, and said as much.

"Nay, but you should hear of him. I will ask my lady to let you see his book of sonnets and madrigals, with the quaint epistle to the reader prefixed to it, of which the two lines I have repeated are the last."

This was the first but not the last time when the varied knowledge of this Princess filled me with amazement. It may be said it is but a slight thing

to record that she could claim acquaintance with this work of Master Byrd's, one of the gentlemen, as I afterwards learned, of the Queen's chapel. But it was but a sign of the wonderful gifts of the Princess, and the quickness with which she attained knowledge and the memory which helped her to retain it when acquired. She was happy to possess these gifts, for they beguiled many weary hours, and she studied with so good a result that she could, even at this early age, when I first had the privilege of serving her, read and write somewhat of French, Italian, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

"Mistress Watson," she now said, "taught me to love poems and sonnets, and to read them in many tongues; and in happy days my father would make me recite them for his pleasure, and delight to hear me speak in my mother's French, which he would say was music in his ear, ever since she had said to him,—'Je vous aime, vous êtes mon bien aimé.'"

"Alack! dear father—parted now from us. And such a father!"

We were interrupted now by the entrance of a gentlewoman sent by the Countess. She came in hastily, and said,—

"Enough music for this evening. Take your leave, sir, of the Princess. I fear me you have dis-

obeyed the orders of the Countess and have been exciting the Princess to melancholy." Then looking at me with a pair of searching black eyes, she said, —"Good-even! do not delay."

"Nay, good Mistress Lee, do not be so hasty," the Princess said. "Master Blount has played many tunes, and it was only when I spoke of singing that I was sent back to sad thoughts. I cannot choose but have them at times, when I remember those who are parted from me. But I am writing a letter to my dear sister Mary to tell her I am happy to be here at Sion House, and how good the Earl and Countess are to me."

I had replaced my viol in its bag, and, taking my stick, was making my reverence to the Princess, when, to my delight, she held out her tiny hand to me, and Mistress Lee said,—

"Her Highness is pleased to bid you kiss her hand."

"Yes," she said, with one of her sweet smiles, "in token that I found your music pleasant, and that I am well pleased to have your service."

These words sent me on my way rejoicing, and from that moment I gave my King's daughter the allegiance of a true heart.

I was awake at dawn the next morning; the

singing of the birds, loud and clear, chased all slumber away, and very soon I was abroad in the park, where spotted fawns were feeding and stately deer raising their heads amongst the bracken and tangle of long grass.

All nature seemed rejoicing on this summer morning, and I, casting off melancholy, thought how much was left me to enjoy, though the manly exercises in which I had once delighted were denied me.

I had seen nothing since our arrival of Mistress Gower, except a glimpse I had caught of her in the hall at supper, but her place at the board was at some distance from mine. I had no doubt that Sir Evered Pole had preceded her to Sion House, though whether he had obtained a place in the household did not appear.

I was returning towards the house, along the margin of the pleasance separated by a thick yew hedge from the wilder part of the park, when I heard voices near me.

"You were a fool to come hither. I bid you to join the troops at once."

"You know wherefore I came. I will have the answer—Yes or No."

"No, then; that is, I will make no promise."

"You are favouring that baby-faced milksop with his songs and his crooked leg. I applaud your taste, Mistress Gower."

"And I abhor *yours* for casting a slur on a man because an honourable wound, got in a sore fight, has lamed him for life. I scorn such cowardice, for it is cowardly to speak thus of him, and he has, let me tell you, more sense in his little finger than you have in your whole body."

"At least I have more strength in my sword arm."

I had walked perhaps slower than I needed to have walked along the path of the yew hedge, those on the other side had come on slowly also.

I could not, however, turn eavesdropper, nor be so base as to hide that, by accident, I had heard what had been said, and which, I could not doubt, referred to me.

The outside path, by the thick yew hedge broke off abruptly at the end by a turnstile leading into a paddock where men and maids were milking cows. I passed through it and the noise it made on the pivot made those who were just reaching this part by the path inside the hedge pause.

In another moment I was confronted by Mistress Gower and Sir Evered Pole.

"I wish you good-day, Sir Knight of the Lyre and Lute! You are abroad early," Sir Evered said in mocking tones.

He was passing on, but I called to him to stop.

"Mistress Gower," I said, "I would fain have a word with you. Grant me one minute."

"Ten, if it please you," was the reply, and my fair lady beamed on me with one of her entrancing smiles.

"I care not to act the part of an eavesdropper," I said, "nor to come at knowledge in a roundabout fashion. Thus I would say that I was walking at the outer side of yonder yew hedge while you, sir, were with this lady on the inner. All you were pleased to say to my detriment reached my ear all unwillingly. I know now that I cannot count you as ought but an enemy, and it is as well that I do know it."

"On my honour," Sir Evered said, "you sorely need to learn manners, and I can only treat you as you merit—with contempt! Come, Mistress Gower, let us hold no longer parley; I am ready to break my fast, and I take it you must be by now."

I felt myself humbled; and yet sore and angry beyond words, I turned away and, passing through

the gate, took the path through the paddock to the back of the house.

If only I could have given that proud man the blow which would have provoked a fair fight; but I was helpless—and unable to resent the insults he heaped on me. I had not gone far, skirting the hedge of the field, when I heard my name called and, looking back, saw Mistress Gower hastening to overtake me. Ah! how sweet she was, and how I felt that a hundred such insults as Sir Evered Pole's were but as dust when weighed against her favour.

She laid her hand on my arm and said,—

"I am grieved for you, Master Jocelyn. Be very sure I had no part in such language. You heard my words also, did you not?"

Yes, I had heard them, and I might be secure that she was in good sooth, at heart, not well disposed toward Sir Evered, for had she not indignantly rebuked him for his scorn of me. Now all my anger and hatred and humiliation beneath the sunshine of my lady's favour, suddenly vanished.

"I care not for Sir Evered," she said; "that is, more than for a dozen others. He need not disturb your peace, for he joins the King's troops to-day, having received his orders. I shall not break my

heart when I see him ride off, and there's an end of it."

Was it really the end? Somehow my halting tongue was loosed, and I poured forth a strain of gratitude to her for what she had said, and of fervent protests of devotion to her. She received it all very graciously, and her eyes, me-thought, were dim with emotion as she said,—

"I will be your friend always, Master Jocelyn, and while we are together in this service I will do my utmost to maintain peace, and you will find me ever ready to give you advice, for," she said archly, "I am older than you are."

"I do not think it," I said, for I always dislike to hear any reference to my youthful looks. "Sure twenty years may be reckoned as full manhood."

"Ah! but I have counted twenty-two," she said; "and as methinks one year of a man's life goes to ten of a woman's, I am venerable, while you are in your first youth. Hearken! there is the bell sounding for breakfast. I am as hungry as if I had ridden many miles. One word in parting, Master Jocelyn. Drive Sir Evered Pole out of your head, and fill it with worthier folk, your humble servant for one," she said, as she tripped away.

My head! Nay, in my heart she would ever

have the first place, I thought, as I followed her to the entrance of Sion House.

Is it better, I often ask myself, to trust and be betrayed, than never to trust at all?

I cannot answer that question even now; but this I do verily think, that the love of a boy of twenty—even if that love is spent on an object less worthy than he deems it—is a safeguard and has an ennobling influence. Yes; I say this with all sincerity, for I have proved it to be true.

What if pain and heartache follow quick upon joy and delight? May not these be useful? May they not try us as silver is tried, and teach us to set a higher value on truth in ourselves and others?

But I must remember the caution given to me when I began to write this history. I must take heed to winnow the chaff from the grain, nor dwell as much as I find I did in my journal upon my own small concerns. Indeed it was at this time, as ever, the near and the personal got precedence over the far and the universal.

Our country was getting deeper and deeper into the woeful misery of that worst of all wars—a war between the people of the same country ranged on different sides.

When summoned to my mistress (as I am ever

proud to call her), the Princess Elizabeth, one afternoon, soon after this encounter with Sir Evered Pole in the Park, I found her in no mood to take the instruction on the viol which I had been commissioned to give her.

"I can only think of one thing to-day, Master Blount," she said. "My Lord the Earl has told me that, ere many days are passed, I shall see and embrace my dear brother, the Duke of York. I can scarce understand how this has come about; but it gives me such joy I could dance to the sound of your viol, I feel so merry, so glad!"

The lady in attendance, whose turn it was to be present, now said,—

"Your Highness must be in ignorance of the real reason of the Duke of York's coming."

"The real reason! Nay, I care not for that, only to see him, and have one of our talks together. Little Henry is too young to speak of all those things which have caused this separation from the King, my father. Doubtless it is his wish James should come hither, knowing the love we bear each other."

The lady sighed, and, as I thought, said unwisely,—

"Alas, poor child!"

"Wherefore alas! Nay, I will know why you look

so doleful. Ah, me! it would seem I can never feel real joy again. If you shake your head, and look as if something were behind, I shall go forthwith and inquire of my Lord what it is."

"My Lord is gone to London to-day. Your Highness could not see him."

"My Lady, then," and the Princess drew her little figure up to her full height, and prepared to walk with a dignified air down the room.

The gentlewoman in attendance rose in alarm. She had evidently received her orders to be careful that some news should not be communicated to the Princess.

The entrance of the Countess of Northumberland was welcome. She met the Princess just as she had reached the door, and taking her hand, said gently,—

"Your Highness is not to take an airing after dining to-day, for the sun is hot and your head might suffer."

"I did not want to take an airing," the Princess said. "I was about to seek you, to inquire why my brother, the Duke of York, is expected to arrive at Sion House. My Lord told me as much, and now, when I was so glad I could dance for joy, yonder gentlewoman shakes her head and sighs and looks

dismal. I feel there must be some reason for the Duke's coming, of which I am ignorant."

The Countess bent and kissed the sweet face upturned to her.

Tears were dimming the Princess's lovely eyes, which had before been alight with joy, and her lips trembled as she faltered out,—

"You are ever kind, dear Countess. Tell me the truth."

Then the Countess seated herself on a settle, softly cushioned, in the bay-window, and said, drawing the child close to her,—

"We would fain spare you ill news."

"Ill news? Ah! my heart told me it was ill news. My father—"

"Nay, there is no further harm like to happen to the King, that I know of. Calm your fears. He has, however, placed his liege subjects in a painful position, by giving himself into the hands of the people of Scotland. The troops quartered at Oxford, with whom His Highness the Duke of York is stationed, have no power to provide longer for him. There is, moreover, a panic that the plague is broken out at Oxford."

"The plague!" the Princess cried. "That dire disease that kills off hundreds in a day."

"Nay, it has not assumed such large proportions yet; but taking this into consideration, and the poor and meagre allowance which is all that can be granted to the Duke of York, he has craved permission of the King, his father, to join you, as the Houses of Parliament have sent him an invitation to do so. The Scottish people have prevailed on the King to surrender all his garrison towns, and Oxford is one; therefore my Lord has despatched coaches and a fitting suite to bring the Duke hither as soon as may be. It will, methinks, be a happy change for him. Why look so sad, dear Princess?"

"Sad! I can scarce look otherwise—my father is in the hands of the Scots. I fear me they are not trusty; they may break faith with him."

"Nay, do not forestall evil, and look on the brighter side. I have heard to-day such wondrous good news of your success with your studies from the tutor. How such news will gladden the King's heart."

"If I were only a boy! If I were a Prince, like James, I should not so easily let the Parliament manage my affairs, to be sent hither and thither at their bidding, forsooth!" Then suddenly changing her tone, the Princess said,—"I do not forget that you, my Lady, who are, alas! on the side of the

Parliament, are good and kind to me. Do not think that I am ungracious, for that would ill befit a king's daughter."

"You may rest on the assurance, dear Princess, that, as long as my Lord and I have the honour of keeping you as our guests—"

"We are your prisoners," the Princess said quickly. "Guests can come and go as they list. We cannot, or I should summon all my ladies and gentlemen and give orders for us to start to be with the King."

"And add to his trouble and perplexity by so doing," the Countess said. "You would, sure, not desire to do that?"

"No!" the Princess said. "No! it is all so hard to understand. There is only one thing left for me —to be patient and have faith in God." Then with the childish power of throwing off trouble for the time, the Princess took the Countess's hands in hers and kissed them, saying,—"I will ask Master Blount to strike up a tune, and if you will summon two ladies and Master Percy, we will dance a minuet—to show our pleasure that the Duke of York will soon be with us."

Mistress Preston was ordered to fetch the ladies

and the page, young Percy, and to my joy one of the ladies was Mistress Gower.

I played my best, and it would be hard to picture more grace and dignity than the Princess displayed as she stepped through the paces of the minuet.

Then a saraband followed, and then a contre danse, in which little Prince Henry galloped to his heart's content—with sparkling eyes and quick-moving feet—laughing as his sister took him by the waist and pirouetted with him up the room and down again.

The Countess stopped the dance after half an hour, for it was easy to see that the Princess was more exhausted than she would allow and that her breath came too hurriedly.

Then she re-seated herself in her own particular chair, and leaning her fair head against the crimson cushion, she said,—

"Master Blount, you must sing now. Have you not obeyed me, I pray you, and made a new ditty?"

Mistress Gower looked at me and said,—

"You have many songs ready; let us have one."

Then I tuned my viol and struck up the melody to which I had set the verses composed in honour

of the charms of Mistress Gower; but I changed the words, feeling abashed at the thought of laying open my secret to those who were present.

Was it indeed a secret? There is a story of that large bird, the ostrich, that, when he fears pursuit, he buries his head in the sand of the hot country where he is bred, and, leaving his big body uncovered, fancies that because he can see no foe, no foe can see him.

The Earl of Northumberland had gone to receive the Duke of York at St. James's Palace, and the boy was met with every expression of good-will by the people.

I was told the air rang with shouts of acclamation and the throng strewed flowers before the open coach where the young Duke sat.

The Duke's retinue, brought with him from Oxford, was dismissed, and the Earl was ordered to choose a tutor to superintend his studies, and gentlemen to wait on him.

The Princess met her brother in the hall of Sion House, and it was touching to see her clasp her arms round the Duke as if she could never let him go.

Not the less was her joy tempered with regrets. She was not dazzled by his account of the honour done him when he arrived at St. James's, and she

realised, as I think at this time the Duke of York did not, that he was as truly a captive as the little Duke of Gloucester was, and in the relentless hands of the Parliament.

Nevertheless it was evident that there was every consideration for his comfort. In good sooth, from what we gathered from those who knew, the arrangements of the Duke's household might be called princely when set against the miserable poverty which surrounded him at Oxford.

The Princess Elizabeth was not blind to the position in which her brother was placed.

He came to Sion House, and the meeting between them was one of rapturous delight on his part; but on hers it was mingled with sorrow that he had lost his freedom.

"Were I a boy," she said, "I would not long remain a prisoner. I would make my way to my father, and that at all risks," the Princess said to Mistress Gower, who repeated the conversation to me.

Mistress Gower bid Her Highness try to remember how all those about her were devoted to her service and that a word was enough, if she spoke it to the Countess of Northumberland, to obtain all that she desired.

"Ah!" the Princess said, "what if the lark of

which Master Blount sang were shut in a cage with golden bars that glittered in the sunshine? Would that make him as happy, think you, as his free flight in the morning air, free and joyous? Nay," she said, "liberty is sweeter than all the rich gowns and jewels in the world."

A removal to St. James's was made in the autumn, and the tranquil life at Sion House was at an end.

The Princess drooped in the more confined life at St. James's, and a letter addressed by the King to his son was intercepted, and the Earl of Northumberland felt in duty bound to lay it before Parliament.

The King, it seems, had replied to one, written and concocted by the two children—Heaven help them! they were both but children of tender age—in which he bade the Duke make his escape, if it were possible without danger, and join the King at Newcastle, or, if that were impossible, go to the Queen, his mother, in France.

The matter ended by the Duke being examined by the Commissioners appointed by the Parliament, when his ingenuous answers to questions so wrought upon the gentlemen that they dealt kindly with the Duke.

But the Earl of Northumberland was required to

keep a stricter watch over the three royal children, and henceforth to be very cautious who were admitted to their presence.

The kingdom was now rent into three divisions —Army against Parliament, Parliament bitterly opposed to the Army, both against the King.

It is in vain for any who did not live in those times to picture what they were, and God grant we may be delivered from the same, and our children's children likewise.

My journals at this period, when we made frequent moves between St. James's and Sion House, were, I almost shame to say it, filled with my own affairs; records of how often Mistress Gower smiled on me; of how she spoke kindly to me—which was not seldom; of my bliss when she gave me a flower to wear that had been pinned in her breast-knot; of my mad jealousy when others had had her favours, and of my, as I now think foolish, dependence upon soft words, and my distress when I got rebuffs.

On one occasion I think one of these rebuffs was salutary. I had been singing and playing on the mandolin, when Mistress Gower said,—

"What do you mean to do with your life, Master Jocelyn?"

"Devote it to your service," I answered.

"Pshaw! I have heard you say that often enough, and I scarce know that you know what you mean by the words; you must bestir yourself and find some errand to perform which will bring you into notice. You cannot sing songs all your days and dance attendance on ladies. In good sooth, I cannot discover what benefit my Lady Leicester and my Lady Sunderland supposed would follow on your being attached to this household of the Princess Elizabeth. Were I a man, you would not find me dallying here; but I am an orphan on the wide world, and a woman, worse luck! so I have to eat the bread of dependence, and as old Mistress Brownson says, 'it sticks in my throat at times, and is like to choke me.'"

I felt sorely hurt at the words, but I made a desperate effort to speak calmly.

"I would fain perform any service which was given me," I said. "Nor do I think I am wholly idle. I am at the beck and call of several of the Princess's gentlemen, and strive to do my duty."

"Well-a-day! the same may be said of me, but I cannot endure this much longer, and next time a move is made from St. James's, I shall be off, whither I know not, but a change I must have. Are you to

be trusted? or, if I tell you what is in my mind, will it be like pouring water into a sieve?"

"How can you ask?" I said, rashly enough. "I swear that what you say will be held sacred."

"Well, then, meet me in the garden by the elm hard by the wicket-gate in St. James's Park to-morrow, before the world is stirring, and I will tell you what is in my mind. Walls have ears, and yew hedges too, it seems," she said, laughing. "Poor Jocelyn!"

I felt the hot blood rush to my face; the very memory of the insults heaped on me by Sir Evered Pole covered me with confusion.

"I pray you, do not speak of that time," I said. "I would fain blot out the memory of it."

And then I was almost instantly consoled by Mistress Henrietta giving me her hand, which I covered with kisses, and vowed that I loved her, and only her, and that I would gladly die to serve her.

"You are true and loyal, Jocelyn," she said sadly. "There are some I could name who might well take a lesson from you. Doubts and fears beset me as to many who protest they will love me to death, but I have none such fears as to your faithful love for me."

If I had not been the fool I was, so besotted with

my love and admiration for Mistress Gower, I might have marked that, though she spoke of my love for her, she never so much as gave a hint of her love for me.

But her words set me thinking, and I said to myself,—"Whatever she tells me to do, I will do it, and prove myself something better than a mere singer of ditties, and writing missives for those who can scarce scrawl their own names on a scrap of paper."

Soon after I had left Mistress Gower, a messenger called me to the presence of the Earl.

He looked troubled and ill at ease. The addition of the Duke of York to the household had added to a burden which was already heavy.

"I hear, Master Blount," the Earl said, "that you write a good clerkly hand, and I suppose you give others the benefit of it."

"I write at the orders of the gentlemen of the household, my Lord."

"The young Duke's tutor for one?"

"I have done so once, my Lord."

"Do so no more. Since that letter to the King was intercepted, I have to exercise more care than ever as to what passes out and is received here in the shape of letters. There is a letter for you. It is no part of my desire to act as a spy, but I am

bound in honour to those who have trusted me not to betray that trust. Therefore, I must beg you to open this letter in my presence, and inform me of its contents."

I did so without hesitation. I knew the small, clear hand on the cover to be that of my Cousin Katharine.

She had only written to me once in all the time which had passed since we parted, and I had twice written to my mother to inquire for her health, to which I had no reply, for my mother was no scribe, and writing was somewhat toilsome to her.

I broke the seal and untied the silk which fastened the letter, and I said to my Lord that its contents were but details of my home and my mother.

"It would be irksome to you, my Lord, to read the letter," I said, but I held the sheet towards him.

"Nay, nay, Master Blount, I can put confidence in you. My widowed niece, my Lady Sunderland, and my good sister, the Countess of Leicester, fully persuaded me of your honesty before I set eyes on you, and you have given me no reason to doubt that that character of you is a just one. I may wonder why you were sent hither, for I see nothing greatly to your advantage. If it was with the notion that, these difficulties at an end, the King would requite

your father's services, and do somewhat to compensate you for the wound which has lamed you, my poor niece, my Lady Sunderland, is mistaken. I see no prospect of these unhappy divisions being healed, and it seems that all things are against the restoration to power of the King. Alack! that I cannot take his part. I, whom once he loaded with favours, and, I may say, was my own familiar friend. Falkland might well break his noble heart, and die crying for peace, yet would have none of it without honour. I dare say no more; but, Master Blount, remember I *trust* you."

"My Lord," I said, "God forbid I should betray that trust. You know full well that I was sent hither, as a servant of the King, to be attached to the royal children."

"Yes, yes, I know it, and that gentlewoman, Mistress Gower, on whose account most of the men have lost their wits for love, and the women for jealousy. Is she trustworthy?"

"I could swear she is, my Lord. She is—"

"Ah! Master Blount, are you one of her devoted slaves! Methought Sir Evered Pole had won the prize. I know not his whereabouts, but this is certain—he is not one to range himself on the losing side."

I now took my letter, folded it to cover the confusion I felt at my Lord's words, and bowing low, left his presence.

"I could swear she is true." I repeated the words again and again. What right had I to swear as to the perfect faith of Mistress Gower? My sole ground for this was the blind devotion I entertained for her.

The change to St. James's from Sion House was not acceptable to any of the Princess's household; and, for myself, I felt the ill effects of the town life. St. James's was but a dreary abode, with big, desolate corridors, and but poorly furnished rooms.

I had one allotted to me up a steep, stone staircase, where I retreated now to read my cousin's letter—no hard task, for her writing was, like herself, clear and, in its way, perfect, neat and regular, while what she wished to say was expressed with remarkable precision.

The letter began thus—it lies before me, shut between the yellow leaves of my journal book,—

"COUSIN JOCELYN,—I write to save the eyes of thy mother, for they are becoming dim, more from tears and night watches than from age.

"I have leave from my step-father—methinks a

leave gladly given—to take up my abode at Norbury Manor till such time as thou canst return.

"My Lady Leicester has bidden thy mother twice to Penshurst, but she chooses rather to stay here. The people love her, and what wonder?

"I may say that thy letters give pleasure, and, methinks, if that pleasure were oftener repeated, it would be a boon to one who loves thee, namely, thy mother.

"We hear rumours of the evil state of the country; the noise of battle does not reach this quiet spot. My people, commonly called Quakers, do well to abstain from war; sure it is a gruesome thing when a brother's arm is raised against a brother as is now so frequent.

"I read aloud to thy mother such books as are at hand. The minister of the church comes over with a volume, for the most part but dry stuff.

"I have found it needful to accompany thy mother to church, as her sight is so dim, and old Ursula does not affect the service on the week days. I love to read the Psalms of David verse about with the minister, and what are called the lessons from Holy Scripture for the day are edifying.

"For the rest, I like best the covering of silence

rather than prayers from a book, which seem to be somewhat after parrot fashion.

"Robin is crippled with rheumatism, but works as before. Ursula's tongue is like the clapper of a bell, and she does not spare me on occasion.

"It is somewhat of a waste of precious time to ask questions which stand small chance of gaining an answer, but I set down one or two for thy consideration.

"How fares it with the fair lady of the dusky hair?

"How many sonnets have been penned in her honour?

"And now I rest, thy cousin,

"KATHARINE DANBY."

"This letter is by the hand of a messenger who will, so we hear, be despatched from Penshurst on the morrow, and will, in passing on his way, tarry here for it."

The letter was endorsed:—

"To Jocelyn Blount, to the care of the Earl of Northumberland, in the household of the Princess Elizabeth."

I read this letter several times, and thought my cousin was mighty careful to say nought but what was necessary, and, no doubt, the stiff mode of the Quakers clung to her style as to her dress. Yet I think I was piqued that she said nought of my return, and that when I came I should be welcome.

I was troubled at hearing of my mother's failing sight, and turned over in my mind whether I should get permission to return in the spring; but I was now filled with one thought, I shame to say, to the exclusion of all else—the errand upon which Mistress Gower would despatch me on the morrow.

That evening, after supper in the hall, the household was ordered to assemble in one of the large rooms of St. James's Palace, for the Duke of York desired to have music and dancing.

A few from outside were permitted to mix with the attendants on the royal children, but a sharp look-out was held as to the communication they might have with the Duke of York. He had very frank manners, but he never forgot he was a prince, and, boy as he was, stood aloof from any familiarity unbefitting his position.

In this he was different from the Prince of Wales, who had jests and gibes ready at any mo-

ment, and would pass them as freely with one of low degree as with one high in office of the State.

The Earl and Countess of Northumberland were, if watchful, courteous and respectful in their manner to the children.

It was a happy thing for them that such a noble gentleman and gentlewoman were set over them, and yet it was true that the Earl was a stout Parliament man, and strong in support of measures which, he believed, with many other good men, were for the defence of the liberty of the subject.

The Princess Elizabeth's fair face was less serious than was its wont as she took the Duke of York's hand and opened the dance. There was a wondrous grace about her, and a dignity most remarkable for her tender years; indeed, I have often thought since, that in that short life the perfection of womanhood and the grace of childhood met. The gifts of her mind were signs of the first, and the simple trust and unquestioning devotion to her father, tokens of the last.

I played for the dancers, with the assistance of another man who drummed, I will not say played, on the harpsichord, and the spirit of the music became infectious, for everyone pirouetted and stepped

out with spirit. In a pause, when I was resting in one of the alcoves formed by the projecting bay of the central window, the Countess approached me.

"Have you any notion where Mistress Gower is this evening?" she asked.

"Nay, madam! I can only suppose she is indisposed; she is prone to pains in her head."

"While she gives others pain in their hearts," the Countess said with a smile. "Yonder stands one of her victims."

And looking in the direction of my lady's eyes, I saw one of the pages standing against the wall, watching the door to see who entered, with an anxious and troubled expression on his face.

"I trust you are not another of Mistress Gower's victims," the Countess said, pleasantly enough.

"Nay, madam!" I answered with some heat; "rather, I am her devoted servant."

"Is that so? Poor boy!"

Why—why would everyone still call me a boy? It chafed me sorely, but I plucked up my courage and said,—

"I am proud to say it is so, madam, and then, without resenting my manner, which was scarce respectful, the Countess said,—

"Well, well! may your honest service be re-

quited, Master Blount. And now we must strike up for a last dance; it gets late, and Her Highness the Princess begins to flag."

Another dance, and yet another followed, and then the royal children were escorted to their chambers. The Duke of York saying, as he passed by me,—

"Our thanks are due to the musician, I think; on the morrow, you must sing me one of the ditties of which my sister the Princess tells me."

I bowed low in acknowledgment of the compliment, and the boy passed on.

I was astir before daylight the next morning, eager for the meeting with Mistress Gower.

Her absence on the previous evening had seemed to me strange, for she was mostly glad to show her grace in dancing, and her finest gown donned for the occasion.

I crept stealthily along the corridor and through the hall, where the porter yet snored with two soldiers of the guard, also fast asleep.

Was I doing wrong, that I had need to be so careful of waking them?

To unfasten the heavy door was not possible without making a noise; but I bethought me of the small side window, at which the porter questioned

all who knocked for entrance before he admitted them.

The hasp of the lattice gave way as I lifted it, and the casement opened. My difficulties were not yet over, for, with my crooked leg, it was not easy to vault on the sill, but faint heart never won fair lady, I thought. My lady's commands were to meet her, and what was left me but to obey? At least, she should not call me a chicken-heart and a coward.

Then, after two unsuccessful attempts, I got both my legs on the wide ledge of the window, and flinging my stick before me, first I let myself down on the stones of the courtyard, and, by the light of a dim oil lamp, found my way out, till I reached the place Mistress Gower had fixed upon. What if the gate was closed, for it was a high wicket, with a row of spikes on its top?

It yielded to my touch, and I found myself in the garden, and reached the elm where my lady said I should meet her. But it was yet scarcely dawn, and the November morning was chill, and the sere leaves, dripping with moisture, fell one by one, silently, like ghosts of a dead spring, from the spreading branches overhead.

And now that I had accomplished this much, I began to ask myself what would follow.

The Earl of Northumberland had spoken of his necessity of watchfulness, and had even felt bound to inquire as to the letter which had come with a dispatch from Penshurst for me.

I remembered that I had sworn to keep the secret, which was the cause of this meeting, and reproached myself, when too late, for rashness.

It would read like an idle tale, to which none would give heed, were I to set down all the passionate, all-absorbing devotion I felt for Mistress Gower. I do verily believe—poor fool that I was—that I would have died for her. I had committed to heart the greater portion of "Stella and Astrophel" while at Penshurst, and I fancied myself a second Sir Philip, winding out sonnets, of which my lady was the theme."

Alack! I was but a poor and feeble imitator of as grand a personage and true knight as ever trod the earth.

As the daylight strengthened, I became aware that my apparent hiding behind a tree might attract notice, and I began to walk, sentry like, backwards and forwards.

No one came. The time went on, and the

clocks chimed for seven in loud, harsh tones, and I felt chilled in body and distracted in mind.

A fool's errand! a goose chase! I thought as I paced up and down the sodden ground, the murky sky seeming to brood over me like a heavy pall.

At last a quick step was heard, and in another moment a man, wrapped in a long cloak, his head muffled in its cape so that his face was hidden, came up to me.

"From Mistress Gower?" he asked.

"The same," I replied.

"You are her servant?" was asked in a muffled tone.

"I am one Jocelyn Blount," I replied, "in the service of the Princess Elizabeth and His Highness the Duke of York."

"Ah! no offence; it may be that "suitor" is a better word."

The tone was insolent, and though the face was hidden, I began to suspect who my questioner was.

"Take this packet to Mistress Gower, and bid her heed its contents."

I hesitated.

"I came hither at dawn by her order, to meet, as I believed, herself."

"That was a pretty wile of hers; she is ever

ready-witted. If she had bid you meet Sir Evered Pole, you would have called back. You need not be afraid, boy; I shall not harm you. Here, take the packet and do the bidding of the fair lady."

I was filled with impotent rage. I had been deceived, and a lie had been told me by one who I had sworn to the Earl a few hours before was to be trusted.

I raised my stick, and supporting myself against a tree, struck Sir Evered across the face, and drew my sword.

"Now, see here, boy," Sir Evered said, in his cool, hard voice, "do not provoke me to run you through the body, which I can do in one moment, and should have no scruple in so doing."

"I challenge you," I said, trembling with passion, "to do your worst. I can defend myself, though I have but one leg wherewith to stand. I have also an arm to wield my sword, and I bid you come on in fair fight."

A low laugh, worse to bear than any blow, came from under the folds of the black cloak which was yet wrapped about the lower part of his face, and had protected it from the violence of the blow the stick had dealt.

"See here, boy, it is of vast importance that this

packet reaches Mistress Gower, and of still greater that it falls into no other hands. If I fling you to the ground and stab you to the heart—"

"Try!" I said, brandishing my sword. "Try! and we will see that two can play at this game."

"No, I shall not try, however much my fingers itch to whip you like a hound rather than pierce your heart with this sword. No, I shall not try. Put up your sword, you poor fool, and take the packet, and hie with it to your fair lady without more ado, and begone."

But I yet hesitated; then there was the faint sound of a distant whistle. Sir Evered flung the packet at me, drew his cloak tighter round him, and was soon hidden by the trees which skirted the path where we stood, of which the elm tree was the first, standing a little apart from the rest.

I picked up the packet, which was securely sealed and tied with strong silk, and placing it in my pouch, gathered myself together to return whence I came.

When my anger had cooled, a terrible sense of humiliation beat me to the very earth.

What had I done to be thus treated by an arrogant, evil-disposed man? His very treatment of me showed what he was, for mean and base beyond

compare is the man who can scoff at and trample on another who has an infirmity of body, brought on, as mine was, by fair fight in battle.

Beneath contempt, base, cruel—and yet, was it possible that one so fair, so pure, so endowed with gifts as Mistress Gower, could have private dealings with him. Was he in truth her accepted suitor, and I made only her tool—her poor weak tool—to serve her ends; and worse, far worse, his?

I made my way back to the palace, determining that I would crave an audience with the Earl and ask permission to return to my home, on the plea that my mother's failing eyesight demanded my presence at Norbury Manor.

The storm of passion raised by Sir Evered's insolence was past, but shame and humiliation remained.

I passed through the hall without exciting remark, but I heard one of the guards in command reproaching the porter for neglect of duty in no measured tones.

"You drank too deep, you rascal, last night, or you would have seen yonder casement was not fastened securely."

"I swear it was fastened," the old man said. "If

you doubt me, ask your own guards, who go round to see all is made fast at night."

I lingered to hear no more, but passing the time of day and good morning with the men as I made my way to the foot of the stairs, I hastened to my own chamber, and flinging myself on the bed I had left three hours before, lay there with hot tears I was ashamed to shed forcing their way through my fingers, as, with my hands pressed against my eyes, I would fain prevent them from flowing forth.

As I read in my journal of this dark day in my history, I can pity myself afresh for what I went through of shame and misery. And I can again feel the beneficial power exercised over me by that sweet and gentle Princess, who more than aught beside served to calm my passion and raise me from the depths of woe into which I was plunged.

I am well conscious that such words as these seem far stronger than the occasion demands. That, after all, it was no dire misfortune to be betrayed, and to see a castle built on sand fall to ruin.

No, it does not seem so great a misfortune when weighed with others, but it may be some of those whose eyes may rest on these pages when I am passed away, may have known the bitterness of betrayal, and can understand what greater souls, secure

on the heights of proud indifference, fail to comprehend.

I sought Mistress Gower as soon as my duties permitted, but it was imperative for me to put the packet into her hands when no eyes were upon us. This was somewhat difficult to manage, and evening had come before I could seize the fitting opportunity. At last I saw that her eyes were questioning me, and when she left the gallery where the household had been assembled after supper, I followed her, divining that she would expect me to do so. What a spell! what a charm she had to subdue in her presence—everything but the sense of that presence. I strove after calmness, and taking the packet from the breast of my coat, where I had kept it hidden all day, I said,—

"Here is a packet which I am bound to deliver into your own hands, Mistress Gower."

"Ah!" she said, "well done! I knew you would not fail, and I thank you from my heart."

Then extending both her fair hands, she looked on me with those lustrous eyes, in whose depths I even then thought I saw something tenderer than friendship, something more than mere gratitude. I think now that, like many fair women who play havoc with men's hearts, and are as varied in their

moods as the vanes on church steeples, that they ofttimes succeed in deceiving themselves, as well as others, as to the nature of their own feelings.

Mistress Gower bade me seat myself on a stool at her feet, and then said,—

"Have you forgiven me, Jocelyn, for taking you out of your bed in the dark morning on false pretences?"

"I went to meet you," I said; "and deeply, fervently as I love you—"

"Hush!" she said. "No more protestations; it pains me to hear you make them."

"It may pain me also to make them, if they are all in vain to win your regard; but this much I must say, that I cannot deem you free from blame for what you have done."

"No," she said; "no, I am not free from blame, but it was my only chance of communicating with Sir Evered Pole. What passed between you?" she asked. "Tell me."

"Nay," I said, rising from my seat and standing before her, no longer a suppliant. "Nay, it would ill beseem me to relate in your ears the unseemly and cowardly attack on a defenceless man, which provoked a rejoinder which was made in the heat of passion.

"You do not say you fought with Sir Evered?" and she pressed her hand to her side.

"He refused to fight with me," I said, "though I challenged him to do so."

"How dare you? It is well he spared you. He is known to be an all but unconquerable foe, and you might have been lying a corpse yonder—and then, what should I have felt? I should have been ready to die of grief, for I should have felt I had killed you, Jocelyn. Oh, Jocelyn," she went on, "I am in a sore strait. Sit down again; we are uninterrupted here, and, I think, are safe from listeners. This packet that you have brought me contains directions for my flight with the Duke of York."

"Your flight?" I said.

"Yes; remember you are sworn to secrecy. No man of honour can break his oath."

"Alack!" I said, "you are cruel beyond belief. If I have sworn secrecy to you before I knew the nature of the secret, I have also given my allegiance to the Earl of Northumberland. He trusts me, and I will not betray his trust."

"And you will betray me, then?" she said.

I hesitated, weakly perhaps, but the spell she exercised over me now was such that, for her sake,

I could even be a traitor to a man I revered, and who trusted me.

"Say nought of this matter, Jocelyn; the scheme is yet far from arranged. The Duke himself has but an inkling of it, but the plan is that Sir Evered and his servants should await us at a place appointed, when all things will be in readiness to convey the Duke and ourselves over to France. Sir Evered has been at Newcastle and has seen the King, who will amply reward him for his service when he returns to power and these miserable rebels are subdued. You will not be forgotten; and, sure, to be remembered by your King will be a sweet reward, to say nought of what I shall entertain to you of gratitude."

As she spoke this and much more, it was as if I were carried away by a rushing stream, I knew not whither, and was powerless to resist. Mistress Gower gave me little chance of speaking; but at last I managed to put in a word.

"What," I asked, "if the plot be discovered? As you well know, the last attempt to get the Duke out of the hands of the Parliament failed, and resulted only in a far stricter surveillance. The Duke's ingenuousness and simple devotion to the King his father, won upon those in power not to visit his

participation in the design too heavily on so young a lad as the Duke, but a second failure would entail far more serious consequences; and even if the Duke escaped to France, to the Queen his mother, these royal children left behind would fare the worse. Consider all this, Mistress Gower, I beseech you; and why need you be mixed up with any such designs? Sure it is better for you to remain here. And how could you form one of an expedition in which Sir Evered Pole is the chief mover? It is not because I have suffered from his base treatment of me; nay, not because he has taunted me, that I entreat you to beware of him."

"Hold, Jocelyn! not another word. I have cast in my lot with Evered Pole—and I must stand or fall with him—I am his wife!"

I suppose, when a blow comes suddenly as this blow came upon me, those who have had the like know how its very suddenness dulls the pain which is inflicted.

I stood stunned, and neither spoke nor moved.

Presently I staggered toward the door, and when Mistress Gower came after me, laying her hand on my arm saying,—

"Jocelyn, I pray you do not look like that—as if you had had your death-blow—I shook off her

hand, but she still grasped my arm with the other. "I did not know. How could I know you really cared for me? Forgive me, Jocelyn! forgive me! for I find it hard to forgive myself." Never did she look more lovely than at this moment. The tears streaming down her face, her whole attitude pleading and sorrowful. "Forgive me! forgive me!" she repeated.

I dared not trust myself to utter a word, dreading to lose all power over myself. I had loved, unwittingly, God knows, another man's wife. I ought to have almost loathed her. I ought to have turned from her with indignation.

Alas! I could not do so. Betrayed and humbled, I left her, and not one word passed my lips.

Of the miserable night which followed, I have written too much in my journal. It is pitiful to read now, while it were ill-chosen of me were I to repeat it here.

As an old man, I may be ashamed of such weakness, and yet—and yet—I was sorely tried, and my first love had, forsooth, come to a bitter end.

My face, after a sleepless night of misery, betrayed me. I was questioned as to my health, and the physician, who came at stated times to be satis-

fied as to the health of the Princess, was ordered to prescribe for me that day.

I felt I could not remain at St. James's, and my mother's failing sight would provide an excuse for my desire to return to my own home. I sought an interview with the Earl of Northumberland, and asked permission to return home.

He looked up at me with an inquiring, searching glance.

"Are you sick?" he asked. "I heard from the Countess that the physician could not detect any bad symptoms this morning."

"No, my Lord," I said; "my sickness is not such as a leech can cure. He cannot minister to a mind diseased."

The Earl spoke more lightly,—

"Ha! is it a story of blighted affection? Take courage, boy! we have all to pass through this stage, and we come out of it none the worse. Is your mistress cruel?"

"Pardon, my Lord, I cannot speak of this further."

"Poor boy!" the Earl said kindly, seeing my evident distress. "I will not press you further."

"My mother's failing sight makes me think I should return to look into the affairs of my small

estate, and relieve the burden which must needs fall on my cousin, who has the charge of my mother."

"Well said. You can have a horse and man for the journey; the Princess is vastly taken with your music, and, I dare to say, will desire you to return, and so good a character is given me of you, that I desire it also."

I felt overcome by the Earl's kindness, and debated in my mind whether or not I ought to divulge the knowledge I had—that there was another scheme forming for the escape of the Duke of York to France. I was sorely perplexed as to my duty in this matter, more especially as I had innocently abetted and aided the plan, by bearing the packet from Sir Evered Pole and delivering it to Mistress Gower.

I had sworn to keep the secret entrusted to me, not knowing what that secret was, but others entering the Earl's presence at this moment, I felt I could not say more then, and the Earl's parting words were to the effect that I might depart on the following day, and so dismissed me.

It happened that I was ordered, after the midday dinner, to instruct the Princess on the mandolin, and to sing to her the ditties she was pleased to approve.

I had scarcely seated myself at her bidding, for she was ever considerate, and thought standing was irksome to me, than she said,—

"Master Blount, methinks you are not well. Put aside the mandolin to-day, and take your rest on yonder settle, and let us converse instead of songs and music."

I was in good sooth glad to escape raising my voice in singing, and the sympathy expressed on the Princess's fair face emboldened me to say,—

"My sickness, Your Highness, is not of the body. I have had a wound, of which I must not speak, but I have had permission to return to my own home till such time as it may please you to recall me."

"But it does not please me that you should leave me. I must have speech with the Countess about this," the Princess said in a tone half-fretful and half-imperious.

"You must not leave me, Master Blount. I desire you to stay; and, in truth, these changes made of those about me are a sore trial to me. My truest friends and servants are taken from me—two by death, which is God's pleasure, but others by the will of men, and that is quite another matter."

"Your Highness may be assured that, if you do

me the honour to recall me at any time, I shall come with due speed; but my mother is going blind —there must be many matters which demand attention at my home, Norbury Manor. Our old retainer, who was with me on the field of Newbury, is old and infirm, and a younger servant who can take charge of the farm-land, or rather overlook those who work on it, must be found. The only person with my mother is young and with no experience— my cousin, Katharine Danby, one of the people called Quakers. Thus Your Highness sees, my reasons for craving permission to return are strong. The best of mothers deserves my care."

"Yes," the Princess said. "Yes, good Master Blount, I regret I spoke with undue haste. It is right you should return, and I would not hinder you. Alack! that I cannot go to my mother in that distant country, nor to my father in this. Think you, Master Blount, that my heart does not ache for a sight of him? None but God knows how I love him, and he is in the hands of enemies and these of the people he has loved. His own familiar friends have deserted him, have turned against him, my noble father! At times I think of my little sister Anne with envy. She has escaped all these troubles. I saw her just before she died; I was only a little

child then. I feel almost a woman now, for sorrow makes us old, Master Blount!"

How sad it was to hear this from a maiden of such tender years. Old, when she ought scarce to know what age meant.

"My two little sisters, for there was yet another called Katharine, who, just baptised, went to God with her white robe unstained by earth—my two little sisters are safe, and ofttimes I have wished that God had taken me hence also. Little Anne lisped a prayer as she lay a-dying. "Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, lest I sleep the sleep of death." My father said,— "There was no death for such as little Anne; that she shut her eyes to wake in the light of God." I ask myself, was it not best so? for here she would have only lived to see the darkness which blinds our eyes and rests on this poor kingdom. But, Master Blount, when I am sore troubled I think of God's love, and that He can bring good out of evil, and that all these rebels could not fight against their King without His leave. You say you have troubles, and, indeed, your face is so wan and so changed that I feel sure they must be grievous. Take these troubles—I know not what they may be—to God, and pray Him to turn them into good."

She talked long in this strain, and, as I have said, her sweet spirit seemed to take the bitterness out of my heart.

Presently she began to speak of the weariness she felt in listening to the long sermons of one Master Marshall who had been appointed to minister in the Chapel of St. James's.

She said she was fit to laugh at his long face and whining tone, and that she tried not to listen to him when he threatened every sinner with God's wrath and dreadful torments after death.

"For sure, it is best to preach that God is Love and will forgive even the naughtiest of His children if they are sorry; just as my father forgave James once on a time when he had fought with Charles and given him a sore blow on his face, so that the blood streamed, and James was frightened at what he had done. My father whipped him to show him he had done wrong, and then forgave him, saying it was so with our Father in Heaven. He chastened us for our profit, but He was ever full of love and ready to forgive."

All this and much more passed during the time allowed for me to be with the Princess. Deep was the impression made upon me by this child's won-

derful faith, and power of so expressing it, that she seemed to compel me to have it for myself.

We were interrupted by the coming of Mistress Gower in charge of the little Duke of Gloucester, who clamoured for a tune that he might dance a jig with Mistress Gower.

"Strike up! strike up! Master Blount. Do you hear?"

"Peace! Henry; nor speak in so imperious a manner. Say, if it please you, Master Blount."

But the child pouted.

"He is to do as he is bid," he said. "I am the Duke of Gloucester. Tell him, Mistress Gower, to do as I bid him."

But Mistress Gower turned away and did not speak.

I took up my mandolin, and kneeling before the Princess, I said,—

"I bid Your Highness farewell; may it please God that we meet in happier time!"

"I say Amen to that wish, Master Blount; and I pray you will have a safe journey and find your mother in good health. You promise to return at my bidding;" and then holding out her hand, I kissed it and so took my departure.

Not once did I trust myself to look at Mistress

Gower, and I knew, if no one else knew, that that was her name no longer.

The worst pain was over for me, and the next morning, soon after daybreak, I had started on my homeward road, and so closed that chapter of my young life.

BOOK III.

No memorie liveth in the hearte so long or so sweetlie as that of a love slayne bye honour. The flowers of Maie repeat to us the storie of the loste delite. The birds sing of it, and if our teares starte with their first notes at morning, and our sighs rise with the flowers' odours, such teares and sighs are but as dewes and breathes from heaven, wherein was laid up for us the soule of that slayne love.

OLD WRITER (16th Century).

BOOK III.

My return to my home was not too soon. I found my mother, not only in feeble health, but purblind and unable to attend to the affairs of the place as heretofore.

I had much to arrange and settle, and chose from among our men one to succeed poor Robin, who could scarce hobble from the porch to the gate.

Ursula was yet active and keen-sighted, and although she was constantly on the watch to pick a quarrel with my Cousin Katherine, she was of use and her services could not be dispensed with.

The brightness and spirit of the little household were due to my cousin, and though quick-witted to see my dulness was of the mind rather than the body, she never put a question to me thereon, as many who knew me, constantly would do—telling me I was mightily changed, they scarce knew me; that I looked ten years older; that I

must have had some sore sickness to cause my altered appearance.

In truth I had gone through a sore sickness, but not of the sort they imagined.

From time to time I made visits to Penshurst, and in the month of April, near two years after my first expedition to join the household of the King's children, I received a peremptory order from my Lord Leicester, who was then at Penshurst, to go thither at once.

I set forth immediately, returning with the messenger who brought the summons, and bidding my mother be of good cheer, for that I should return in a few days.

I was now able, by dint of practice and determination not to be beaten, to ride on horseback as a man should ride, and not sit like a woman on a pillion saddle.

When I rode up to the Castle on that fair spring afternoon, my thoughts went back to another spring, when I had fallen a victim to a love which it had taken me many a long day to strangle and renounce.

Had not Sir Philip Sidney done this? Had he not left on record how he had fought against a passion which the marriage of his adored Stella had

rendered unworthy of any true knight and gentleman.

I humbly followed in his steps, at however great a distance and however feebly I did follow; and if I came out victor, I owe much to him for his example.

I found a great stir in the large hall when dismounting in the courtyard. I passed into it. There were many people congregated there, talking in groups, and evidently about some news that had just been brought.

One of my Lady Sunderland's gentlemen, on seeing me, came up and said his Lady would give me an audience at once, for she had been anxiously awaiting my coming.

I found Lady Sunderland and my Lady Leicester in the chamber where I had first waited to have the plan unfolded for my joining the household of the Princess Elizabeth, in company with one who had brought so much pain and distress for me.

"Good Master Blount," Lady Leicester said, "a messenger has been despatched from my brother, the Earl of Northumberland, giving orders which cause me a great uneasiness. You know, I take it, the King is now a prisoner at Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight?"

No. I had not heard as much, though I knew full well that the King had been delivered into the hands of the enemy by the treachery of the Scots, and that his children had been bandied about from place to place, without any consideration of their tender years, or the delicate health of the Princess Elizabeth.

"Before we tell you more," Lady Sunderland said, "we must give you to understand that the Earl, my uncle, is greatly harassed since the escape of the Duke of York."

"Has His Highness then escaped?"

"Yes; and it is suspected that a gentlewoman, for whom he felt a kindly interest, has been one of the instruments in effecting this escape, and it is not the first time she has tried to compass it. The Earl is greatly perturbed, for he had watched over his wards with the utmost care, but who can circumvent a traitor? The person in question, so we learned from the messenger who arrived hither with this news yesternight, is Mistress Gower, aided and abetted in her design by Sir Evered Pole. It seems that this lady, in whom I trusted, has been secretly married for many months to Sir Evered, who has been attached to the King's service, and has since been sent on a secret mission to the Queen in

France, and to the Princess Mary at the Hague. By the connivance of Mistress Gower, or, as we must say, Dame Pole, the Duke escaped in her clothes, and both reached the waterside, where Sir Evered is supposed to have met them."

Now Lady Leicester said,—

"My good brother is much put about by this. He has given information to the Parliament that though he made himself responsible for the safety of the Prince, it was utterly impossible for him to guard against schemes and plots laid for the escape of any of the children. Great changes have perforce been made. The Duke of York's household is broken up, and that of his brother, the young Duke of Gloucester, has been greatly enlarged. The Earl, anxious to have about him those who can be trusted, desires your return, and also I am directed to tell you, that the Princess Elizabeth greatly desires it. How soon can you start?"

"I must crave permission to return to Norbury for a few days," I said, "for there is much demanding my attention before I leave my mother. I fear me she will take my absence but ill, for she is growing daily more infirm, yet so true is she to the King, that she would not hinder me from rendering service to his children. Of this I feel assured, al-

though I can but marvel that the Princess should desire my return, when so many worthier than I could be found."

"Tut! tut!" Lady Leicester said, "do not tempt me to flatter you by saying you are, of all others, fitted for the service of the Princess, because though true in your allegiance to the King, I know you would not connive at any scheme which might end in my good brother being sent to the Tower by these rebels, or, God knows! lose his head. He is a very mirror of honour, and he did not delay to give the Parliament news of the Duke's escape. But he has had small thanks for his keeping watch and ward over the children, often so short of money that he is fain to borrow or raise it by some means to carry on the household of the Princess and the little Duke of Gloucester. Now, my Lord will wish to have speech with you. He holds himself apart from dissensions as much as may be—would that our sons did the same! Algernon is ever hot-headed and wilful, and this has, I do not deny, made a breach between me and him. But that Philip should have made common cause with the Parliament is a sorer trial, for I had not suspected him. To be made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and fight against the faithful subjects of the King, under

Ormonde, has been a bitter thing to both his father and me. It won't last! it won't last! Nothing lasts now. All things are topsy-turvy, and every one stands on a shifting quicksand. Governor to-day, in prison to-morrow; rich one hour, poverty-struck the next. And yet Algernon and those with him talk of noble aims in making their King a prisoner, so that England may be delivered from oppression. Rather beaten down by it, say I."

My Lady Leicester had great powers of mind, and never spared words, ay, and sharp ones, too, when she was roused.

I was summoned to my Lord's private apartment that afternoon. I found him with books and papers before him, and everything around him seemed to tell that he had retired from the battle of life and only watched the fray from a distance. My Lord greeted me kindly, and said with a smile,—

"So this is the musician, Master Blount, is it?"

He had seen me at times ere this, but I had never before had a private interview with him. He bade me sit down, and told me he had heard that the Earl of Northumberland desired my return, and that he was ready to furnish me with an escort. Then

he sighed heavily, and leaning back in his chair, said,—

"I withdraw myself from the strife, Master Blount, and it is as well. I make notes of it in this book, and as I write on one page I know not what I may have to write on the next. My children are separated from me by this cruel war. There is Algernon, an ardent supporter of Cromwell. Think of that—a Sidney hand and glove with a rough, canting fellow who is aiming at self-aggrandisement. Phew! I can scarce bear to think on't, and less speak on't. My Lord Northumberland, he is no fanatic, and can be honest and faithful to the charge committed to him without bating one jot of which he believes to be right. If there were more men like him, and fewer like my hot-blooded Algernon and this man he calls Master, the country might be saved. It is a woful case; and were I a younger man I should not be sitting idle here in my fair home of Penshurst, though, methinks it may be as well that I am, more from harass and troubles than years, unable to take to horse and join the true subjects of the King. As to you, Master Blount, I suppose you would be also ready to take up arms if you had full use of your limbs? But you have done your part, and that lame leg of yours is a

badge of honour and nothing to be ashamed of, nay, rather proud of."

"As I cannot serve the King with my hands, my Lord," I said, "I must be content to do so by striving to brighten the captivity of his children."

"Well said, well said; poor innocents, they are like to suffer more and more, the Princess and the little Duke of Gloucester. The Duke of York and the Prince of Wales are older and better able to look to themselves. All the same, I can feel for my good brother-in-law at this escape of the Duke of York. It was well contrived to outwit him, and he might have suffered for it in a way that boy would have seen cause to deplore."

"I wish you God speed, Master Blount," the Earl said; "when will you be ready to start?"

"The day after the morrow, if so it please you. I must return to my house first, and see how things can be best settled in my absence."

"Aye, do so. I know my lady would be well pleased if Madam Blount took up her abode at Penshurst while you are away. But I hear she is best pleased to remain at home."

The Earl discoursed for some time after this on the affairs of the kingdom, leaving his chair and pacing to and fro as he spoke.

He was a noble gentleman, a true Sidney, and one whom, as I look back over long years, I have found few, if any, to equal.

I was astir with the lark the next morning, having ordered my groom to be ready for an early start.

I felt impelled to cross the wide expanse of grass, and walk once again under the shadow of the budding beeches, were I had, in the years past, seen one who had filled my boyish dreams, and been almost the idol of my soul.

Alas! the dream was over, and I had come to know that the loveliness and grace, the music of a voice, of which I never heard the like, were not the signs and tokens of perfect and pure womanhood I had fancied.

Then, as I quaffed the air of the sweet spring morning, I seemed to brace myself for what of life yet lay before me. Long or short, I would strive, by God's help, to keep before me the noble example of one who had suffered as I had suffered, and come out conqueror.

The sun was yet low in the east, the birds were singing their first matins, and the not-to-be-expressed charm of God's awakening world possessed me.

I think on the very spot where Love had pierced me with his dart, as the poets say, the wound his

arrow had left was cured, and from that time the soreness troubled me no more. A careless boyhood in which there was but little thought beyond the present, one mad carousal before the fight at Newbury, one delirious taste of the glory of a fierce battle, then all such feats of arms ended for me.

And since then a taste of love scarcely less delirious, and then another fight sorer than the first; the one leaving me crippled for the rest of my days, the other, as I humbly hoped, to leave me a better man with a firmer grip on the great realities of life and death, and a more resolute determining to serve God in the way he had appointed for me.

As I turned to retrace my steps to the Castle to my surprise I met with my Lady Sunderland. At her side a fair-haired boy of scarce five years old, who, with a mimic bow and quiver of arrows slung across his shoulder, and a little silver trumpet at his side, was a wondrous picture of childish beauty.

I made a low reverence to my Lady Sunderland, and she was so gracious as to bid me turn and walk by her side, while little Master ran forward to greet a keeper of the wood, who, at his bidding, made a mark on one of the beech trunks at which he was to aim, his mother standing by and admiring the

grace of his supple figure in green breeches and cape lined with yellow with silver braidings, his cap, with a long tassel, on his hair, of the true Sidney hue, shining in the beams of the sun, as it shot through the branches above his head.

"Have a care of him, Master Keeper," Lady Sunderland said; "nor let him aim uncertainly, or get a hurt by the rebound of the string."

"I will mind to your orders, my lady. Little master is a fine marksman already."

Lady Sunderland laughed a low, silvery laugh, and I thought, as she stood there, it was small wonder that Mr. Waller had made her beauty his theme, and left on record his devotion to her.

Presently Lady Sunderland turned towards the Castle, and before us, in its setting of trees in their first freshness, the grand and stately building rose under the canopy of a sky so clear and blue, that it was as if the heaven we look to, as the dwelling of the departed saints, were in those azure depths of space.

Lady Sunderland talked to me with great kindness, inquired for my health, and said she was glad to perceive I was less of a cripple than when I had first set forth to take service in the Princess Elizabeth's household. She spoke much of this noble

Princess, and said she had seen her not many months before, when she had been pleased to speak of me and the part I had in beguiling her from sad thoughts.

"I am right glad you are again taking up your duties in my uncle's household," Lady Sunderland said. "I fear me, the sweet maiden will scarce see womanhood, she is so like a fragile flower which, the wind passing over it, is gone. And if it be so, what trials may she not be spared. That thought consoles me often when I am mourning for my Lord, cut down in the flower of his manhood, leaving his children fatherless. We can never foresee from what ills those who die young are delivered."

As she spoke, the little archer came running up to say he had aimed so well that he had shot the arrow into the very middle of the round O the keeper had made on the trunk; then he bounded back again, his mother following him with her eyes.

Alas! how little did she think that her boy in all his health and loveliness would soon need to make his mother exercise the faith she professed to hold, that those who die young are happy in that they were taken from the evil of this sinful world. Yes, that is true, but we are all human, and in our

grief we can at first but weep that the young are taken from present joyfulness and earthly delights.

For the present is real, and the future but a blank uncertainty. At times, it may be, the future is aglow with rosy light, and we say, when some cherished dream is realised, happiness will be ours. At others, it is dark and gloomy, and we forebode the worst, and say, such sorrow, if it comes, would kill us outright. In both cases nothing comes as we expect. The rosy vision proves but a vain shadow. The cloud of crushing sorrow is pierced with light. By God's mercy, then we are called to pursue our way day by day, and to do, to bear, and to suffer according to His will.

My Lady Sunderland had recovered in some sort from the grief which the death of the Earl had caused her, but she still lived mostly at Penshurst with her children. Her young sisters were cheerful companions, and the Earl, her father, ever looked on her as his joy and sweet companion. Thus the home of her childhood and early youth might well present attractions which the now desolate family seat of the Spencers at Althorp, to which place she resorted once in the year to visit the grave of her noble young husband, had lost for her.

When we came full in sight of Penshurst, my Lady turned to me and said,—

"You are something of a poet, Master Blount—so I have heard. Do you know Ben Jonson's lines about 'yonder fair mansion?'"

I had the power of retaining what I learned. Indeed I have at times, on twice reading, been able to recite the poetry of others. Methinks this is often noticed in those who, like myself, have no original gift, and it is made up to them by the ease with which they can make the works of others their own.

"Yes, my Lady," I said. "You must mean the lines,—

> "'Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,
> Of touch or marble, nor canst boast of row,
> Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold;
> Thou hast no lantern, whereof tales are told,
> Of stair or courts, but stand'st an ancient pile,
> And these, grudged at, are reverenced the while;
> Thou joy'st in better marks of soil, of air,
> Of wood, of water; therein art thou fair.'"

"Thank you, Master Blount," Lady Sunderland said; "but, see, here come my sisters to upbraid me for being abroad so early."

As she spoke, Lady Mary and Lady Elizabeth Sidney came up.

"Nay, Dorothy, you should heed our mother's words, nor drench your feet with dew, ere the sun is really up."

"And are you not running the same risk? But little Harry has been my companion, and so eager to use his bow and arrow with the keeper's instructions, that I could not deny him."

I felt my presence was no longer needed, and making a low bow, I passed in across the courtyard, as the big bell, so familiar in its tones, boomed in the quiet spring air, to summon the household to break their fast.

Looking back, I saw a group under the further gateway, which could scarce be matched for grace. The Ladies Sidney in the first freshness of their youth; and Lady Sunderland, with the subdued air of one who had left her first youth behind with the sorrow of her widowhood, and the boy by her side who saw the light but two short weeks after his father had fallen, full of pride in his success with the bow and arrow, his face aglow with health and beauty.

Did I not say it is well to take what of joy the present gives; but little did any of that fair group of the noble race of Sidney dream that only too soon Lady Sunderland would alone remain, the rest sleep-

ing quietly in the church, whence now the bell chimed for seven, answering in more musical tones the boom of the big bell from the Penshurst tower.

By mid-day I had reached my home, and as I dismounted, saw my cousin Katharine nailing up the truant branches of a many-flowering rose which hung in garlands round the porch.

"Back so soon?" she said, "in time to fasten yonder branch which is beyond my reach. See, take the hammer and I will hand thee up the nail and bit of cloth. Take heed not to pierce the branch with the nail." Then, as I obeyed her, she said,—"Dost thou bring any news?"

"Yes," I said, "and you must help my mother to bear it well. I am ordered off again to join the household of the Princess Elizabeth without delay."

"Ah! is it so? Well, I dare to say thou art glad."

"Mingled gladness and regret," I said; "every feeling in this life is mixed."

"'No rose without a thorn,' is that what thou would'st say, and as I have proved?" she said, holding out to me one little finger, from which a crimson drop was hanging. She plucked a rose leaf

and rolled it round the wound, saying, as I expressed concern,—"'Tis but a prick, see yonder comes the minister. I thought he would soon find thee out, and hear thy news. I will go into the house and hasten some repast, for thou must be hungry after a ride of twenty miles."

The worthy clergyman, Master Miles, now came hastily in.

"The news," he said, "has just reached the village that the King is a prisoner. Do you know any particulars?"

"Nay," I said, "but few. The tidings reached Penshurst with orders from the Earl of Northumberland that I am to resume my duties in the household of the Princess Elizabeth without delay. I therefore start on the morrow, the Earl of Leicester sending an escort for my safety, lest we should fall in with a party of rebel horse."

"As may well happen, a troop were quartered at Tunbridge last week, and without consent of a stout royalist lady, emptied her larder in a twinkling, and occupied her chambers; the captain of the troop making the place hideous with psalm singing and graces and adjurations which these Roundheads call prayers. I would sooner they tapped a barrel of good ale than made religion a pretence for such

doings. I am an old man, Jocelyn," my good old friend said, "and I could wish God had been pleased to call me as he called your good father, before these evil times set in, the King a prisoner, and what next?"

"You leave this place in good hands," Master Miles went on; "that young Quakeress has a wonderful power of management about her, and such a way with her, that all the people mind her word; I have good hopes, too, that she will be baptised and made a member of the church. That she is learning to love the services is plain enough. You had scarcely ridden out of sight t'other day, when by another road up came a sober-faced young Quaker on a steady gray mare. You may guess his errand."

"Nay," I said stupidly, for sure I might have guessed it.

"Why, to make love to our fair friend—her suitor, doubtless, though I warrant he did not bend his knees to her. I knew this because she came to see me in the twilight and bid me let her aunt know that she had no intention of wedding anyone; certainly not Josiah Priestly.

"I hope not, indeed, she is worthy of a better fate. I have thought that you might look favourably

on your cousin, and make her indeed, as she is now in name, mistress here."

Now, great as my friendship had been with my cousin Katharine, and pleasant as our converse had been, I, so lately wounded and distressed in mind by reason of my ill-fated passion, it had not entered into my head that my relations with Katharine should be other than they were. Now my old friend laid his hand on my arm, saying,—

"There are others casting admiring eyes on Mistress Danby besides Josiah Priestly, so if you have any thought towards her, were I in your place, I would not delay. She is wondrously clever, and if at times her tongue is sharp, her heart is in the right place, and is true as steel itself."

And now I turned quickly away towards the porch, for Katharine was standing there with my mother leaning on her arm.

"Jocelyn, my son!" and then Katharine quietly put my mother's hand on my arm, and running towards Master Miles, said she would fain show him a brood of young turkeys just hatched, and so they went round to the back of the house together; my mother and I left alone in the parlour, where I had led her.

"I will keep a brave heart, as becomes your father's wife," she said; "and wish you God-speed in your return to take service for the King's children; but my life, dear son, cannot be long, and if in your absence I pass hence, leave orders full and clear of what you desire to be done at Norbury."

"Peter Pearson," I said, "the man who is my steward, is well up to his duties. Ursula and good old Robin must have their place in the kitchen as long as they live, and the serving men are well under Peter's hand, and the two maids under his wife's and Ursula's."

"But, dear son, you forget one who at my death will be solitary—my more than niece, my daughter-in-love, Katharine."

"It is true I had not considered her," and when my mother added,—"There would be a way of settling this matter, Jocelyn," I asked, "What way?"

"By making her your wife, my son."

"There are two sides to that question," I replied. "Even were I ready, I doubt much if your scheme would find favour with Katharine."

"Well, I ask you to write down your wishes in case I am called to die before your return."

"God forbid I should never see you again, mother. Do not indulge in these sad forebodings. Speak the word, and I will crave leave to relinquish this post and abide here with you."

"Nay, Jocelyn, that is not to be thought of for an instant, so greatly it may be for your advancement in the world, if your willing service to the King's children is rewarded when he is reinstated, as God grant, on the throne. The son of one who fell in battle for his cause, the son who himself was maimed for life in the same battle, must perforce win marks of favour. You must e'en go, and your mother's prayers go with you."

The rest of the day and far into the night I spent in consultation with Pearson looking over the small farm premises, examining the statement of profit and loss which Pearson laid before me, of the land held by my retainers only a few acres, but yielding fair crops and returns. Early on the morrow, at my bidding, Pearson asked these men and their wives to assemble in our small hall, where the board was spread for our meals.

A good supply of bread and cheese and ale was provided for them, and I, going round the board, asked those who served me whether they were content with their wage; and those who paid me rent

for land, if they had aught to complain of, to speak out now, while I could, if there was wrong, redress it. But concord and peace seemed to prevail, and I heard nothing but good wishes and hopes of my speedy return to madam and the young mistress, to which last a fervent "God bless her!" was added.

I will not say that what Master Miles hinted and my mother expressed as a wish, did not in some degree influence what followed. As of a sudden a curtain that has hung betwixt us and a fair landscape is drawn aside, and we marvel that we have been so near, and yet, for lack of sight, so far from its beauty, so, all unawares, I found myself looking into my own heart, and finding there a pleasant prospect of friendship and kinship, sealed and perfected by love for Katharine as my wife.

I felt none of the great heat and ardour of that other love, of which, maybe, I have said too much in these pages, though not a tenth part of what, when I began this story of my life, I found in my journal, destroyed now, as is meet, for I would not willingly that any eye but mine should read the ravings of a love-sick boy. Yet there was stirring in my heart a tenderer feeling towards Katharine, and a suspicion awoke that she might favour my suit, for I had seen her calm, pure eyes seeking

mine at times, as if questioning how far my sore heart, of which I had told her, was healed.

The whole of the day after my arrival at Norbury was full of the matters I have described. The next was Sunday, when a great peace seemed to brood over our little village as the men and women gathered in the churchyard to wait till I had led my mother into the church, curtseying and showing every token of respect as we passed. Katharine now frequented the services of the church, and yet still retained the garb of the Quaker and membership in that body of Christians.

I noticed how reverent was her demeanour, and how she shared a large book with my mother, which rested on the broad shelf of the pew where we sat, as our fathers had sat before us. Above our heads, on the wall of the church where our large square pew was placed, were a number of memorial tablets, some wholly illegible and defaced, others still clear enough to be deciphered.

The most recent was that in memory of my father, whereon his name was cut in large characters, and an inscription as follows:—

IN MEOMRY OF
THAT BRAVE AND TRUE GENTLEMAN,
JOCELYN BLOUNT,
OF NORBURY MANOR, ESQUIRE.
HE FELL ON THE FIELD OF NEWBURY, FIGHTING FOR HIS KING AND HIS COUNTRY, ON THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF OCTOBER,
A.D., 1643.

After diligent search his body was not found, but no less does he await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, in that place known to no man, but known of God, as was the sepulchre of Moses on the Mount Nebo.

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED BY HIS SORROWING WIDOW, AND HIS ONLY CHILD,
JOCELYN BLOUNT.

I meditated much as I sat in the shadow of the large pew, and made up my mind there and then that I would put to my Cousin Katharine the question which had been suggested to me by my mother and our good clergyman.

I sought my opportunity in the pleasance that evening. A strange bashfulness and dread of what my cousin's reply would be came upon me, and I, who was ready with my tongue when occasion required, was now almost dumb.

Katharine had her hand full of daffodils, which grew in the orchard at the back of the house. The light was fading, and when I came upon my cousin, her snowy kerchief and cap, tied under her chin with white strings, caught what light there then was, and brought her figure into strong relief against the dark yew hedge, which parted the small pleasance, but a few feet square, from the orchard.

The daffodils gave a touch of colour and added to the beauty of the picture.

"See," she said, holding the flowers towards me, "they have come late this cold spring, not 'before the swallows dare,' as Master Shakespeare has it."

"I marvel to hear you are versed in Shakespeare, Katharine."

She laughed merrily.

"And, prythee, why?"

"I thought your people, the Quakers, denounced all playwrights as beyond hope of salvation."

"Thou makest a mistake too common. My people are not senseless bigots; they have a breadth in their doctrine which, forsooth, many of your church folk miss. But I will be honest with you; it is only since I have been in this house that I have read Shakespeare's plays and sonnets, and that, you must

very well know, who granted me the loan of any book on the shelves."

"Yes," I said, "I remember; it was dull of me to make that remark. I feel dull to-night, and with good reason. I pray you, Katharine, to take another turn," for she made as if she was going out of the pleasance into the square of grass, which lay before the house. "I have a question to ask you."

She played with the daffodils, and bent her head over them.

"Ask it, then," she said.

"You have been as a dear daughter to my mother."

"That is no question," she said; "only informing me of what, let me hope, is true."

"No; but it is a reason for the question."

Again she put me off.

"A reason! Nay, Jocelyn, all questions should be reasonable, that is a matter of course. Unreasonable ones cannot be answered, they must be put aside."

"Katharine, I would fain ask you whether you will promise to be my wife, and thus in my absence, if indeed my good mother should die, as she seems to think too likely, you will remain at the Manor till I arrive to give it and all it contains to you as befits my wife?"

"And thou canst ask me this as a matter of convenience?" she said, in a low, calm voice.

I felt ashamed as she spoke, to think I had said no word of love of her.

"I ask you," I said, with some heat, "because I love you, because I would fain have this friendship of ours deepened into love."

"And I would *not* have it so," she replied firmly. "I am sorry that thou hast asked this question, for it somewhat destroys what was a real sisterly feeling for thee. No, Jocelyn, I am ready and willing to remain here while I can serve my dear aunt—thy mother. When that duty and pleasure are at an end, I shall go forth from the Manor to return no more."

"You are very cruel," I said, "to humble me thus."

"Nay, I would not be cruel; but ask thyself. Is it likely that I could ever listen to thy proposition, made as it was?"

"I curse myself for my folly," I said, vehemently, "for my clumsy wording of what is in the depths of my heart. Why can you not believe me when I say, when I swear that I ask your love as a precious gift. I have had bitter lessons, hard and bitter to learn; you teach me that there is purity and truth

in woman, which I had come to doubt when I returned hither some months ago."

"Hearken, Jocelyn. If I were disposed to heed thee, and grant what thou hast asked, many difficult and not unreasonable questions would arise. I am yet a member of the Society of Friends, called in derision Quakers. I yet hold to some of their doctrines, and admire their plain dress and plain language, and their courage in maintaining both. Their courage, too, in not bending the knee to any man, be he prince or peer, though not bating a jot of true heart-respect where respect is due. I have loved, as thou must know, to attend the services of the church with thy mother, and I have had many serious thoughts as to resigning my membership with the Friends. Then again I hesitate, fearful lest any self-seeking motive should lie unsuspected within. But ofttimes I retire into quiet places and, under the covering of silence, feel the Maker and Creator of all this world I love so well—very near, nearer than under the shadow of yonder church, mayhap."

Katharine spoke so quietly and firmly, that I felt remonstrance was useless as she said,—

"I am ready to be thy true friend and sister, Jocelyn, and to tend thy mother as heretofore; but as to thy question, I say no, and it is final." Then

she resumed her bright manner, and said,—"I must see to the spiced cup for thy mother, ere she goes to her bed, and we must be up betimes to see thee make thy start. Farewell!"

She was gone, and I was left alone. It seemed plain to me that my wooing was never to be crowned with success.

I find in my journal a great deal of lamentation on this score which I do not repeat here, and forsooth, as I write this story, I feel how hard it is to treat oneself without partiality and with perfect sincerity. So now I proceed to a theme fuller of interest, and yet so tinged with the melancholy of those two years, when I was favoured to be near the Princess Elizabeth, and a witness of her patience under suffering. Ay, and her unshaken faith in the love of God who had stricken her, and those she loved best on earth, with trials and griefs wholly unexampled.

Like a violet hidden in the shade, was my sweet Princess, and, like that same flower, preserved in the leaves of my journal, her memory loses scarce anything of its sweetness, but remains as a precious possession to those who love her.

BOOK IV.

"Grace was in all her steps,
Heaven in her eye;
In every gesture, dignity and love."

MILTON.

BOOK IV.

1648. My return to the household of the Princess was marked by the change I observed in her—a change which I fondly hoped was an augury that her life might be lengthened, and the extreme delicacy of her constitution overcome by the attention and kindness she received at the hands of the Earl of Northumberland and his lady.

It seems to me that full justice has scarce been done to the noble Earl; for he was, as I knew, true to his conviction, and yet free from the detestable spirit gaining upon the rebellious army and Parliament concerning their King.

The royal children were at Hampton Court when I rejoined the household. The Princess received me with a smile, and said,—

"Welcome, good Master Blount," giving me her hand to kiss.

There was an added stateliness in her manner. She was the daughter of a king, nor ever forgot it!

Not that it was anything like haughtiness, such was impossible to her; but I think she felt it her duty to uphold the dignity which, as a king's daughter, she owed her father, now that he was unlawfully kept a prisoner in the Isle of Wight, in the Castle of Carisbrooke, from which place he made an effort to escape.

The Princess still delighted in music, and I, having studied to improve my handling of both viol and mandolin, was often in request. On the first occasion, when I was alone with the Princess, she related to me the details of the escape of the Duke of York. She said,—

"I rejoice that the plan succeeded. It was an anxious time for me to see every one hunting high and low for the Duke, my brother, and I knowing all the while he was gone. The play of hide-and-seek is a favourite with little Harry, and we planned it all cleverly, thanks chiefly to Dame Pole, who tried twice to serve us in this matter, and failed. Now she and Sir Evered are in Holland with my sister, the Princess of Orange, and all is well. Lady Pole deserves our best thanks for persevering. I like not subterfuge; but in this case sure, we were justified. Poor little Harry ran hither and thither seeking his brother, and, at last, tired out, he begged to go to

the gardener's house, for that he knew James would hide there at times. I alone knew what had happened, and had to pretend carelessness, and to laugh at James's skill in hiding. All the time my heart beat so loud with dread, that the escape after all might not be made, that I was ready to swoon. Then the loss of my brother's society is a bitter one. Ah! Master Blount, when will the day arrive when we shall have need of no more plots and deceits, but live once more at ease with those we love?"

Presently the Princess said,—

"You had much friendship with Mistress Gower. Some folks have said you were her suitor."

"Never, your Highness, her accepted suitor," I said; "and as you speak of the misery of deceit and subterfuge, I may say that Mistress Gower was my Lady Pole long long before she declared the same to me."

I think my voice betrayed me, for the very thought of the past filled me now with shame and vexation of spirit. I had done my best to forget, and my love for Mistress Gower was dead; but the sting of betrayal is hard to cure, and harder to forgive. Enough of this.

During my absence, the royal children had been

allowed intercourse with the King their father. One of the gentlemen of the household, who was pleased to extend his friendship to me, gave me some account of these gleams of happiness which the Princess was suffered to enjoy. Her love for her father was most tender, and his for her partook of the nature of the friend, who relied on her for comfort and sympathy, as well as that of the affectionate father. The meeting at Maidenhead, in the summer of the year before that about which I am now writing, was the most heart-touching conceivable. Five years had passed since the Princess had seen the King, and the little Duke of Gloucester said in childish wonder,—

"Who is this man?"

The King asked in a mournful tone, "If he did not know him." The child said "No," and then when the King said "He was his father, and that one of his greatest troubles was to think his children were sharers of his miseries," the Princess and Duke of York broke into weeping; as well they might. The King quickly recovered his usually calm and dignified demeanour when General Fairfax came into the chamber. The Princess inquired who he might be, and when she heard, she thanked him so prettily for permitting this meeting with her father, and said

she hoped the time might come when she might requite him for his kindness.

The stout-hearted Fairfax returned humble thanks for the Princess's kind words, and begged leave to kiss her hand, which Master Bower, the gentleman who related this scene to me, said was a favour granted with all the grace of a little queen.

This meeting, beginning sorrowfully, ended happily. It had taken place at the Greyhound Inn at Maidenhead, and afterwards the children and their suite, including Master Bower, were taken to Caversham House, near the town of Reading, with the King. It is a fine mansion, where the Parliament had made suitable accommodation for the Princess and her brother, and where two happy days were passed. There have been none so happy since, for, as the time passes on, the hopes of a settlement between the rebels and their sovereign grow fainter.

But, at Hampton Court, in the same year, and during my absence, I heard there was much intercourse between the King and his children, and that with General Fairfax they were very familiar, and that they won his heart by their sweet wiles and pretty manners. I find in my journal Master Bower's name set against many entries therein. Reporting events related by an eye-witness is surely more like

to be accurate than if they are recorded on hearsay, and his account of this particular interview between the King and his children made a very deep impression on Master Bower, for the man who was to hold, and was even at this time holding, a prominent place in the history of this unhappily divided realm, was present.

It was the custom at these times, when the royal children were with their father, to hold a certain state, inasmuch that the officers in command of the troops were often introduced; and though they greeted their sovereign in their own rough fashion, they were touched, despite themselves, at times when they saw the King with the Princess leaning on the arm of his chair, her hand on his shoulder—the Duke of York—for this was before he made his escape to Holland—on the other side, and the Duke of Gloucester on his knee, with one of the little spaniels, to which the King was devoted, in his arms.

On this occasion a stalwart man, with a round forehead, and dark, keen eyes, with his face rough and peppered with warts here and there, came into the presence. He stood with folded arms, silent like a soldier waiting for an order of march. Now and again the King would address a word to him,

and the Princess Elizabeth was especially gentle and conciliating in her manner to him. She won all hearts, even the hearts of the men in whose brains big schemes were seething, which meant nothing less than the destruction of the King and the undoing of the kingdom. Yet would I say the last with due reserve; doubtless there were abuses which had crept in—there was danger to the liberty of the subject—no firm basis fixed, on which the House of Commons was Parliament, short or long, summoned in haste, to grant subsidies, dismissed or prolonged at pleasure, called at uncertain intervals—all these were matters needing reformation. Alack! that the first steps towards a desired end were set in bloodshed, and that the life of the King, who had been so loved by his subjects, should be offered up as a sacrifice for the attainment of objects which might be in themselves good, but gained by unjust means.

1648. The summer of this year was passed by the Princess mostly at Hampton Court and Sion House. All kinds of plans were rife, and the most contradictory rumours reached our ears.

The Earl of Northumberland was anxious and perplexed, ofttimes sharp in his manner to the ladies and gentlemen of the household, as indeed was likely. For it is beyond the power of man to keep always a

calm, unruffled temper when placed, as the Earl found himself, midway between two contending interests. There was a scheme afloat for setting aside the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, and, on removing the King from the throne, to place there one who was in the hands of the Parliament, to fashion according to their mind, being too young to resist their will, and too inexperienced and ignorant of the true position of affairs to remonstrate, and this was the little Henry Duke of Gloucester. The Earl would have no part or lot in this scheme, knowing how baseless was the notion that such an act could win favour with the vast number of stout Royalists, or could in anywise tend to peace.

It consoles me, even at this distance of time, to recall that my dear young mistress spent the summer and early autumn months of this year in comparative peace of mind.

One day in October I was on duty with the Princess, and she was bidding me play and sing to her one of my simple ditties, when the Earl and Countess of Northumberland came quickly in, bidding me stop my music, as a messenger had arrived from the King. Presently in came two gentlemen, ushering in that faithful servant of the King, Sir Thomas Herbert. He bore in his hand a letter, which had

been first submitted to the perusal of the Earl, which its unsealed condition plainly showed. The Princess was too full of joy to see her father's writing to notice this at first. She pressed the letter to her lips, and bade Sir Thomas give her news of the King.

Sir Thomas knelt and kissed her hand, saying,—

"His Majesty fares well in health, and commands me to give him an exact account of your Highness's condition."

"Tell my father that I am as well as I can be while separated from him. Tell him he is in my prayers and my thoughts every hour of every day, and that I am looking forward to seeing him as the greatest joy left to me on earth. When will that happy time come, Sir Thomas Herbert? Can you give me any hope of the King's return to London?"

"Alas! no, madam," Sir Thomas said; but a look of warning from the Earl stopped what he was about to say.

It was even then rumoured that the King's next move would be to St. James's, as a prisoner on his trial, not as a sovereign returning to his people. But the Earl and Countess of Northumberland were careful to keep back the real state of affairs from the children, which state was daily becoming more hopeless as to the restoration of the King to his throne,

and indeed as to his life, if he were arraigned before the mock tribunal, as was threatened.

The Princess now unfolded the letter, and read it with deep attention. Presently we saw tears were dropping on the sheet, which she brushed away, and turning to the Earl said, coldly,—

"I need not, my Lord, inform you of the contents of this letter, as I see by its condition you are already in possession of them."

"Your Highness knows I act under orders," the Earl said in a gentle voice. "I did but skim the contents; it was pain to me to do so."

The Princess immediately recovered her wonted sweet demeanour. She held out her hand to the Earl, and as he took it and kissed it, she said,—

"I do know, my Lord, that you are ever courteous and kindly-disposed towards me. If I spoke hastily, let me express sorrow for it. You say you did but skim this letter. Mayhap the postscript escaped your observation. If so, I will make you acquainted with it. The King, my father, says,—

"'Give your brother my blessing, with a kiss, and commend me kindly to my Lady Northumberland by the same token.'"

Then, holding out her arms to the Countess, she said,—

"Come near, and let me give you the same token of which my father speaks," kissing the Countess on both cheeks, an embrace which was as lovingly returned.

And now the young Duke having been summoned, came into the chamber with the gentlewoman in whose care he was. The Princess said,—

"Come hither, Henry. I have something to give you, something very precious."

The child went up to his sister with wondering eyes, expecting a new book or toy.

"It is a kiss from the King, your father, and his blessing."

The boy then sprang on his sister's lap, and she kissed him twice, saying,—

"Remember it is in token of your father's love. I shall send back a letter by Sir Thomas Herbert. What shall I say to him?"

"Say I am a good boy, and I hope he is coming to see me soon, and that I can rehearse the *Te Deum* in Latin without stumbling."

We all stood around, much touched by what we saw, and after this Sir Thomas Herbert was closeted for some time with the Earl, and had another interview with the Princess, at which I was not present.

We remained in the country for the rest of this year. I do not know how far the Princess was aware of the coming of the King to St. James's as a close prisoner.

The Earl gave orders that whatever rumours reached the household, care was to be taken to communicate nothing without his permission. But ill news finds its way, however much care is taken to prevent it.

It was evident that the Princess feared more than she hoped. Her health, which had been better, gave way. She would strive to read her favourite books, and use her needle in embroidering a kerchief for my Lady Northumberland, but ofttimes the work or the book fell from her hand, and she would rise and pace the gallery at Hampton Court, her small hands clasped as if in prayer, as doubtless they were, for her father.

The new year dawned in darkness, which no ray of hope pierced, and every heart was filled with dire forebodings. The Princess would now and again speak to me of what was in her heart, but, as a rule, she was scarce able to do so. At length it was of no avail to keep back the position of the King from his children. The Earl himself felt bound to tell the Princess that her father was to be

tried before a tribunal of his own subjects, and that he was meeting this unrighteous action with calm dignity, refusing to allow it was within the limits of subjects to arraign their sovereign on such a monstrous charge. I scarce knew how the household got through those dark January days, nor how terrible was the twenty-fifth day of that month, when the sentence of death was passed on the King. We, who loved her, feared for the Princess's life, when, with all the gentleness and care that was possible, the Earl communicated this direful news to her, that her father was condemned to die. She lay as one dead in a deep swoon, and the physicians had much ado to restore her to consciousness, and even then there seemed but little life left in her. And so she remained, till messengers came with orders that the royal children were to be taken to St. James's to bid their father a last farewell. Then the extraordinary power of will, combined with forgetfulness of herself, were remarkably seen. The Princess bade her ladies dress her carefully, and, after scarce tasting food for two days, she asked for it and wine, and calling little Henry to her, she bade him be sure not to cry and distress his father, for, said she,—

"We are to bid him farewell, and we must strive not to grieve him."

The child burst out weeping at this, and the Princess said,—

"Nay, Henry, this is no token of love; you must try to be good and brave for my sake."

"I will be good, I will," the boy said, "but I want to know why the King, my father, is to bid us farewell?"

"He is going to die," the Princess said.

"And who dares to kill him?" the child said, stamping his foot, and putting his hand on the little mimic sword he wore at his belt.

"Ask no more questions, Henry, but come with me and remember what I say."

How every heart ached, as the Princess passed through the Hall, the little Duke holding her hand, to enter the coach with the Countess, on that sorrowful journey from Sion House, her young face pale as death, every line on it telling of a heart-agony of which, with firm resolve, she repressed any outward sign for the sake of him to whom she was about to say a last farewell, the King, her father.

There was deep silence as the Princess passed, every head was bowed, and tears stood on many faces.

It did not fall to me to attend my mistress on this sorrowful errand, but I gathered particulars of

that day from those who were bidden by the Earl to attend the children in a coach, following that in which they were seated with the Earl and Countess.

It would seem that the Princess's courage failed at first when she saw her father, for, after fifteen months' absence, he was cruelly changed, his hair whitened, his usual careful dress neglected.

A storm of convulsive weeping burst from the Princess as the King took her in his arms, soothed her, and bade her be calm, as he had much to tell her and instructions to give her, and she must listen.

Then her entire obedience to his every wish helped her to obey him, and without more tears she heard all he had to say.

It seems the King told the Princess that she was not to torment herself about his death, that it was a glorious death, for the laws and liberties of the kingdom. He mentioned books he would like her to read, and bade her beware of Popery.

He commanded her to forgive their enemies, as he had done, to be obedient to her mother, but to be true to the Protestant faith, and said that he died in hope that God would set his son upon the throne.

Sir Thomas Herbert related much of these details to the gentlemen of our household, for he was favoured to be present.

After all his instructions were finished, the King said,—

"Sweet heart, you'll not forget this."

"No! never while I live, was the firm answer," and I, who was with her to the end of that short life, knew how faithful she was to her promise.

The poor little Duke began to understand his position better. He was sitting on his father's knee, and gazing up into his face, as he said,—

"They will cut off thy father's head and perhaps try to make thee a King, but mark what I say, do not be made a king by them, so long as your brothers Charles and James live."

The boy sighed heavily, but said,-—

"I will be torn in pieces first."

The King then made a division of the contents of a cabinet of jewels, many of which I have seen broken. There was a George, and Order of the Garter, valuable only for the gems with which they were set, meet emblems of the shattered life of him who had worn them in happier days, yet a life, more especially in these last days, shining brightly with the gems of faith, and a marvellous patience

and nobleness of soul, which struck all beholders with admiration.

The Princess Elizabeth had the two seals her father had always worn about his person, decorated with diamonds.

"These are all I have to give," the King said in a mournful voice.

The whole scene did not last long, Sir Thomas Herbert said; the King purposely shortened it. But, when a cry of anguish from the Princess pierced his soul, the King returned from the bed chamber whither he was retiring to clasp her to his heart once again, and kissed and soothed her with loving words.

Sir Thomas Herbert said the bitterness of death was passed in that moment, and that the King said as much to good Bishop Juxon, with whom he went immediately to prayer, Sir Thomas Herbert only present.

Throughout the next day, that fateful thirtieth day of January, there was a faint hope in the Princess's heart, that some attempt to rescue the King, even at the last hour, might be made. To this hope she clung to the very last, to the very moment when the messenger arrived from London to say that all was over, and she and her brother were

fatherless. It was my sweet mistress's death-blow; she lived indeed for many months, but the spring of life was broken—illness followed on illness, and truly it may be said of her as of One whose steps she followed on the rugged pathway yet left for her to tread, her soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death.

"I do not know that my dear mistress—for so I love to call her—only with the regret that I could not render her better service—I do not know whether many of the miserable details of the funeral of the King really reached her in full.

They carried him to a chamber in Whitehall, that all men who cared to look might see that their King was really dead!

It is said that one of them who looked on that face, calm in death, smote his breast, and tears fell down his rugged cheeks. I would fain hope they were tears of remorse that Cromwell shed. From Whitehall they bore him to St. James's, and there he rested several days. At length permission was given to the Duke of Richmond, and my Lords Hertford, Southampton, and Lindsay, to attend their loved master to his grave, only they were bidden to repair privately to Windsor, for it was deemed that no stir or pomp should be present at his burial, and

this being approved, four of the King's faithful servants were permitted to convey the mortal remains of their dead master to Windsor.

The Governor of Windsor, when shown the order from the Parliament, suffered them to proceed to the burial, and gave them leave to go to the chapel to make choice of a fit place for the King's grave; and having obtained this permission, they prayed that the Bishop of London might be allowed to read the Service for the Burial of the Dead, from the Book of Common Prayer. This request the Governor roughly and peremptorily refused, saying the Commons had put down that book, and he would not suffer it to be used in a garrison under his command. No persuasions or entreaties or remonstrances prevailed; and, with heavy hearts, these true and loyal men went into the chapel to choose the spot where their King should rest till the resurrection of the just.

And now a scene opened out before them, which it is hard to believe possible.

So mutilated, defaced and overthrown was everything within that fair and noble building, that no clue could be found as to where within its walls the royal dead of centuries past were lying. At length an old inhabitant of the town of Windsor said he

could show where there was a vault wherein King Harry the Eighth buried the Queen Jane Seymour. And so, as near the place as might be, the grave was made. When all was ready, they fetched the coffin from the great Hall of the Castle, reverently covered with a black pall.

As they passed along the snow fell—and under a covering of glistening white, the King's body was borne into the chapel.

So, without words or ceremonies, the White King was laid to rest from the trials and turmoils of this troublesome life. Those who bore him to his grave recalled that he was arrayed in a fine, white satin robe when crowned King, and now, again for his burial, he was, as it were, clothed in white. The tears and sighs of the few beholders were his only requiem. The feathery snow-flakes on the pall—the only gleam of brightness to lighten the gloom of that dark day when their King passed out of mortal sight, but not out of the loving memory of his subjects!

The Earl of Northumberland was one of the peers of the realm who had the courage to stand out against the execution of the King, and, as a consequence, he was threatened with immediate depriva-

tion of the care of the Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Gloucester.

And, indeed, though he was even tenderly concerned for the children, and ever kind and considerate to them, more especially since the death of the King their father, the deprivation as to money was nought.

For from his own purse the Earl had maintained the Princess and the Duke for some months, and he wrote a letter to the Council of State sitting at Derby House, to set forth his inability to continue the charge, and praying that steps might be taken to relieve him of the office and the responsibility as to the keeping of the Duke of Gloucester, for whose future many designs were afloat.

I had not seen the Princess for some time; her illness, brought on by the violence of her sorrow, had kept her to her chamber, the physician in constant attendance, administering pills and potions, which, her ladies told me, she swallowed with a sweet patience, though always saying,—"They were useless—for they could not heal a broken heart."

Now, although I had instructed the little Duke of Gloucester in music, and taught him to recite passages from the poets, and to sing in his childish treble voice, besides writing letters and copying docu-

ments, and other duties of a like kind, had begun to think the main object of my service was over, and that I should return to my own home.

Knowing, too, the poverty of my Lord's, the Earl's, purse and the straits he was put to, I did not desire to increase the cost of his household. But he begged me to remain, being so courteous as to tell me he was so well satisfied with my honour, that he felt certain, if I had any inkling of a plot to get the Duke out of his hands, I should at once inform him of the same. When the Earl said this my heart smote me, as I remembered the intrigue to which I was a party concerning the Duke of York, when Lady Pole first tried to effect his escape. I could only say I would not willingly be false to his trust in me, and that if the custody of the royal children passed into any hands but his, I should be unwilling to remain in their service.

The Earl bid me remember that my service might be even more valuable if a change was made; and, indeed, there was some difficulty in finding anyone willing to undertake the charge, which, even if money was forthcoming, was onerous, and needed much discretion.

As the spring advanced, I was summoned to the presence of the Princess.

In the few weeks that had passed, she had changed so visibly, that I could scarce suppress the emotion I felt. She was lying on a couch, the casement of a large bay window open, so that the balmy breath of April might perchance renew her life, as it renewed the life of buds and trees and flowers in the pleasance of Sion House.

The Princess held out her hand to me, and I kissed it reverently, saying,—

"I would fain hope I see your Highness in better health."

"That can never be, good Master Blount; all that is left to me is to await God's will in patience.

"You have brought your mandolin, I see. I shall never strike the strings again, but it will please me to listen at times to what you discourse on it. I find my brother has made progress under your instruction. It is for him I am most concerned, and now that we are to be removed from the care of the good Earl, I fear he may fall into the hands of those evil men, who would perhaps make him King—rather a tool, all innocent and unsuspecting as he is, for their own ends.

"I would fain go to my dear sister, the Princess Mary, in Holland, but it may be I shall soon take

a longer journey, and meet my father before any of his children left on earth.

"Master Blount, I question myself a hundred times, how it has come about that God who rules over all should have suffered this to happen. The good Bishop who heard my father's last words, bids me have faith to believe that God will bring good out of evil. Ah, me! ah, me! nothing can bring back my father."

She was silent then. She lay with her eyes fixed on the deep blue sky of the spring day, where a few snowy clouds passed now and again. It was as if she were looking into those azure depths, where her father had gone, and was half on her way to meet him. Verily her face was as the face of an angel. Words came to my mind and then to my lips. *Perfect through suffering,* and I began to play in low soothing tones a melody which, as I played, took form in these words, and shaped themselves into irregular rhymes.

They won the favour of my dear Mistress. Thus though poor and unworthy, I copy them from my journal as I sang them to her on that April day.

"Naught is perfect here below,
Nay, all is touched by taint of earth.
See, yonder rose, in fairest show,
Has at her heart a worm, e'en at her birth.

"No pleasure unalloyed, no place
But soon, however fair, it lacks some grace.
No festival of song, but lends
A note of sadness ere it ends.
Nothing is perfect here below;
Yes, we must have it so.

"Methought I heard a voice,
I knew not whence it came.
There is perfection, which to attain
The denizens of earth will try in vain.
Those who would gain it come
Through pain and grief,
And bitter tears; meek souls which let
Patience perform her perfect work,
And so, all unawares, are set
Near to the Master's side.
Perfect through suffering, out of pain to peace,
At length to reach the land where sorrows cease
Nothing is perfect here below,
Yes, we must have it so."

After much ado and constant change of plans, the fate of the royal children was, for some months at least, most favourably settled for their comfort.

Not, indeed, that the Parliament intended it to be so; they had wrangled over the proposition by the Princess Elizabeth, that she should be allowed to repair to her sister in Holland.

Some members of the House were in favour of it, as likely to save the expense of maintenance by one-half. But there was a division on the question, and the "Noes" had it, so the Princess's petition was rejected.

Then these worthy members of Parliament looked round for suitable persons to trust with the children, but it was not so easy to find such.

Their offers were refused by Sir Edward Harrington on the plea of old age, and Lady Carlisle hesitated, and could not make up her mind what decision to come to. But by the Earl of Northumberland's intervention, a season of comparative rest and peace was assured to them.

The Princess wrote a letter to the House, praying that the Earl's proposal for her and her brother to be committed to the care of his sister, the Countess of Leicester, might be accepted; and thus the final orders were given for the removal of the Princess Elizabeth and her brother, the Duke of Gloucester, to Penshurst Castle. It may well be imagined what satisfaction this decision gave me, and how I hailed with pleasure the certainty of being within reach of my own home, should need arise there for my presence.

My cousin, Katharine, wrote to me at intervals,

stating facts, but little more. The small estate yielded fair returns, and the man I left in charge thereof performed his duty, and things went smoothly, except in the declining health of the good clergyman of the church, who was daily expecting to be displaced by one of the Puritan ministers who were sent to various places through the country, turning the clergymen and their households into the highways and hedges, and leaving them to shift for themselves as best they could.

The spoliation of the churches, the knocking down of figures of saints or martyrs, the smashing of windows, if perchance a coloured picture of any event in Our Lord's life, or that of the saints, appeared there, the senseless hatred of everything that was fair and lovely in Christian worship, were so many signs of the stern creed held by Cromwell and his followers, that iron creed, of which Calvin had been the first, or almost the first to promulgate. A doleful melancholy religion indeed! in which the glorious beauty of God's love to the fair world in which He has placed us was set aside for the preaching of wrath and fierce indignation against the sinner; wherein the voice of loving entreaty was but seldom heard.

1649. It was in June of that same year that

the journey was made to Penshurst. The Parliament ordered that from henceforth all titles of respect to the royal children were to be dropped; they were to sit at the same table and be provided with the same food as Lady Leicester's own children.

No one was to bend the knee before them, no one to uncover in their presence, and the number of their household was to be reduced.

The Earl, when he informed me of these orders, smiled, saying,—

"If I know my sister, the Countess, and the spirit that is in her, she will not be as obedient as the Parliament expect, but it is as well to keep this opinion to oneself."

On hearing of the reduction of the household, I had feared that I might be dismissed; but the Earl was so considerate as to say again, he fully trusted me, and that he had most especially commended me to the Countess as very honest in the service I rendered.

Lady Leicester was a woman who knew how to rule and how to hold her own ground, and, contrary to all expectation, she succeeded in getting the loan of grand furniture, as she said, "meet and suitable for the royal children." She must have manœuvred well to effect this, for bedsteads with crimson velvet,

fringed with gold and silver, were despatched from Whitehall, with silver dishes and plates, basins and covers, and what not beside.

It rejoiced my heart to see the welcome with which the Princess and the Duke were received at Penshurst; nothing was wanting to ensure the comfort of the children. The Duke of Gloucester had now the advantage of one Master Lovel's instruction, whom the Countess of Sunderland had engaged as tutor to her son. The Princess Elizabeth, who loved her studies, and was far advanced in them, shared the benefit of Master Lovel's lessons with her brother.

Between the Princess and the Countess of Sunderland a sweet and close friendship sprang up, and the new sorrow which had clouded the life of the Countess drew her to the young Princess with deepest sympathy; for the darling of her heart, the little Henry Spencer, had died six weeks after the King's murder.

There was a cheerful air about Penshurst when the three young daughters of the Earl of Leicester were flitting hither and thither, in all the grace and joyousness of early youth. The elder was even then stricken with the deceptive disease of consumption, which, while it gives a lovely crimson to the cheek and a lustre to the eyes, is slowly but surely sapping

the very foundation of health and strength like a hidden and remorseless foe.

Lady Elizabeth and Lady Frances Sidney were pleased to take notice of my skill with the mandolin, and I instructed them on that instrument, as I had instructed to the best of my power the Princess.

It was wonderful, and most welcome to me, to notice how in the air of Penshurst, surrounded with kindness and affectionate care, the Princess regained something of the natural brightness of youth, chastened as it was by the ever-present memory of her father's cruel death. She delighted in the woods and glades surrounding Penshurst, and loved to hear all that could be told her of Sir Philip Sidney and his short but marvellous life. The pictures hanging in the gallery at Penshurst were often examined, and she seemed to make friends with these "silent Sidneys," and eagerly asked particulars of their histories.

Sir Philip's portrait above all became her friend; and one day, when Lady Sunderland was relating the story of his suffering and death at Zutphen, the Princess said,—"Perfect through suffering," and bade me sing again my poor verses on that theme.

"Sir Philip follows me with his eyes," she once

said to me. "I could almost think, Master Blount, that his real spirit was in the picture shining through his eyes on me, as if to bid me take heart and trust in God. That is my constant desire," she added, "and I remember my father's last words, they are written on my heart."

Another favourite picture was that of the young King Edward, who had been so dear to Sir Henry Sydney, to whom he had been the chosen companion of his early childhood.

Before the fair young face of poor Lady Jane Grey, the Princess would often stand gazing with wistful eyes,—"a like death to that of my father," I heard her say one day; "but happy in that she died with him she loved—happier far than those who must live without one dearest to them on earth, as is my sad lot."

I can see my dear young mistress before me now, as she moved through the spacious vaulted chambers and galleries of Penshurst, always with a grace which would strike all who saw her, and with a winning graciousness of manner, that brought every member of the large household to her feet. Her days were filled with occupations; she was seldom idle, books were her delight, and she was skilled at needlework. She was faithful, as the King her father

had been, in the observance of her religious duties, and attended both matins and evensong, which were read by the tutor, Master Lovel, who also acted as chaplain.

The Earl of Leicester paid short visits to Pens-hurst, and then there were often altercations be-tween him and the Countess, about the allowance made by the Earl for the maintenance of the house-hold.

My lady was not content that she should have half her own supplies cut off, because she was re-ceiving the grant of three thousand pounds per an-num on behalf of the Princess and Duke and their servants, which numbered from twelve to thirteen. The Countess was hasty in her temper, and free-spoken, but the Earl knew her well, her perfections and her foibles alike, and though, as he expressed it, a big storm raged at times about the allow-ance, he could trust his wife to be reasonable when she considered what a pinch he had to meet all the costs of his large family and provide for their needs as became their high position in life.

My Lady Sunderland was now meditating a re-turn to Althorp, feeling that the late lord's children should be brought up in the home of their ancestors. That change would lessen the household, but not

the expenses, as the Countess made a liberal contribution to defray them.

Although all was outwardly calm at Penshurst, there were mutterings of a storm in the distance; and rumours came from time to time that the enemies of the late King, more especially Cromwell, who was called "Pride" by the royal family, were dissatisfied with the treatment his children received at Penshurst. And the Queen Henrietta Maria took alarm when an idle report reached her that the Princess Elizabeth was to be given in marriage to a son of Cromwell. It was a false rumour, but it disturbed the Princess mightily, when it came round to Penshurst that this was contemplated. The Princess did not often speak of her mother, but when she did, it was always with love; though I heard her say many a time she would hold to the Protestant faith, and she would do her utmost to keep the little Duke of Gloucester firm also, as his father bade her.

At daybreak, one morning, I received a letter, brought post-haste by one of my serving men from my Cousin Katharine, saying my presence was needed at Norbury, and she prayed me to set forth at once.

I readily obtained permission to do so, and

rode off with all speed with my servant towards Norbury.

On the way I found out from my serving man that a party of Parliament men had arrived at Norbury the night before, and that my cousin Katharine had given shelter to Master Miles, who had been bidden to take his departure from the Rectory to make room for a sour-visaged creature who was to minister in the church in his place.

But I was little prepared for the scene of confusion which awaited me, nor for the courageous stand my cousin had made to block the entrance of the troops into the house. I found all the men employed on the land stationed within the walls of the pleasance, fully armed, and, as I approached, I saw to my amazement my cousin herself at the gateway, calm and resolute. I dismounted quickly, and was soon at her side, saying,—

"What means this attack on two defenceless women? Begone, everyone of you!"

"No, no, Master," the rough-spoken captain of the troops said; "I hold this order from the Parliament" holding out a paper to me—"to clear out all Popish tokens from this church, and to demand food and drink at this house for my men till the work we have in hand is completed."

I drew out my sword, saying,—

"I acknowledge no such authority as you speak of. Begone! or I'll summon my men, who will make short work of you."

Then my cousin, who was at my side, said in a clear voice,—

"Put up your sword, Jocelyn. Let me speak."

"Aye!" with a rude laugh; "say on, mistress. Mayhap your words will be of more avail than the sword of a man who halts on his leg."

"I thought," said my cousin, "only cowards scoffed at an infirmity of body. Peace, Jocelyn, peace; let them hear me."

"Yes, I thought," she continued, "only cowards would try to force an entrance to a house where a blind woman keeps guard over a feeble old man thrust out of his home by unlawful means. I say shame on the whole pack of you, and if there is one worthy to be called a man amongst you, he will stand by me, call off the troops and depart. I say you shall not force an entrance into this house, and I will not be gainsaid."

I was about to speak again, but Katharine laid her hand on my arm saying,—

"Hearken! I have been brought up as a member of those people called Quakers, and I have been

taught that bloodshed is a sin in God's sight. Nevertheless, I tell you, eight brave men, faithful servants of this family, stand ready to fight every inch of the way ere you reach the porch, which is guarded also by two of the bravest of them all. But I would fain settle this matter peaceably, and so I ask you to depart whence you came, and seek for food and lodgment elsewhere, for you will not find it at Norbury Manor House."

"A Quaker are you; well, then I take it," the Captain said, "you hate and abhor Popish forms and ceremonies as much as we do. I would fain hope as much, and so give me a kiss of peace, fair mistress, and I will call off my men. Doubtless there will be provender for men and horses at some of the farms or homesteads at hand, for we have pretty well emptied cellar and pantry at the farm-house yonder."

Can I ever forget how my cousin drew her figure up to its full height, and, strong in her native purity and innocence, raised her small hand as the man made a step forward.

"Back!" she said, "nor dare to touch me; go your ways, and if ever again you be tempted to make an inroad on defenceless women, remember this day!"

My hand was on my sword, and as the man advanced I made a step forward; if I could have run him through the body, I would gladly have done it on the spot. But my cousin again circumvented me.

"Nay, Jocelyn, nay. I think I have won in this struggle without the intervention of a sword."

It was so indeed—she had won. For orders were given for the troops to fall back, when, muttering and ill-pleased, they went to the church to finish their work of destruction, perhaps with all the greater fury, as they had been disappointed of their expected food and drink within the Manor House.

The Captain looked shame-faced as he turned away, as well he might, and now the need for courage over, Katharine's face became deadly pale as I led her to the porch. She turned then for a moment to smile in answer to the huzza which broke from my men, who were stationed on either side of the gateway, but she could not speak, and I was thankful when she bowed her head upon my shoulder and burst into weeping. My mother now stood at the head of the stairs; she had been all through the scene in the bed-chamber, where our good friend and rector lay helpless and ill. Old

Ursula and a young serving-maid were with her, and they had watched from the window and had reported to their mistress what had been passing.

"My son, is that you? Have you come to protect us from those rebels?

I hastened upstairs and took my mother in my arms, saying,—

"It is Katharine who has saved you from these rebels, and sent them about their business."

"My good, dear Katharine!" my mother exclaimed. "Where is she, I cannot see; I cannot see. There is but a dim ray of light left me. I am blind and old, dear son."

"Katharine is below in the parlour; let me take you to her."

"Say a word to Master Miles first, I hear him feebly calling you."

I did as my mother bade me, and going to the good old man's side, I took his trembling hand in mine, and bade him feel secure from further ill-usage, for he was safe under our roof.

"Ah!" he said, "what further ill-usage can I fear. My house rifled, my peace broken, but worse, worse than all else, God's temple desecrated by unholy hands. Dear Jocelyn, there is but one prayer left for me, that God would have mercy on His Church

and deliver it from these ruthless men. I shall not live to see the day, but it will surely come."

It was, indeed, a sight to move a heart of stone, this defenceless old man fast sinking into his grave. They had turned him out of his house on the previous evening, and installed in his place one of the ministers of the sect which now, with Cromwell at its head, was dominant in England. Master Miles's one servant was bribed to remain, and, as I heard, for some time he had been suspected of disaffection.

All that kindly care could do for our old friend was done, and at least we had the satisfaction of knowing he was safe under the roof of the Manor.

Our peaceful village was on that day a scene of confusion, dismay filled the hearts of the simple country folk, who had little dreamed that this wave of destruction and disorder would reach so retired a spot. It was not till the afternoon, and the sun was nearing its setting, that the troop of some fourteen men rode off to prosecute their work of destruction in another village, and I went out to see what had been done. The church was rifled, the altar cast out into the churchyard, the iron box, which had held the chalice and paten, had been forced open, and lay by the altar. The font, which was of oak,

had been chopped up, and the fragments strewed the aisle. The coloured window, wherein was a figure of our Lord, was smashed, and the thousands of bits of glass glistened on the stone steps of the chancel. A stone cross was also hewn to pieces, and two monuments, on which had been sculptured a raised cross, were knocked down and defaced.

As I stood in this scene of wrack and ruin, the minister appointed to take charge of the parish came creeping in.

"How can you justify this work of destruction?" I asked.

"On the grounds of detestation of Popery and zeal for the truth. I have been brought out of the very bonds of iniquity myself, for I was born and, woe is me that I should say it, baptised in the Church of England. I thank the Lord for delivering me! Here," he said, in a loud, rasping tone to the servant who had played his old master false, "sweep the house clean of all this rubbish ere the Sabbath dawns, on which no manner of work can be done—it is holy to the Lord."

I dared not trust myself to reply, and turned away, leaving the man in possession of the church in which I had been made a member of Christ in

holy baptism, and which was now given up to these stern and unrelenting fanatics.

I found Katharine in the churchyard, and I was deeply touched when she said,—

"Jocelyn, I have long ago felt a conviction that I ought to become a member of the Church, and Master Miles has instructed me, so that I am ready. To-morrow will be the first day of the week, and in his sick-chamber he will read the service for the baptism of adults, and then admit me to the Communion. My people have set aside the outward signs as not needful for the strengthening of their faith, but, for myself, I find such will be helpful, nay necessary, for me, at least."

Let us judge no man too hardly, though ruin like this does teach what the undisciplined, narrowed bigotry of man can do, and all under the cloak of religious zeal. Those men knew but little of the reason of what they were commanded to effect; they carried out orders, and took up the cry of wrath against Popery, but the greater part were ignorant, and were but tools in the hands of others.

My heart swelled with pleasure when Katharine made this confession to me. I tried to tell her this, and of all the admiration which her brave stand against those ruthless men awoke in my heart for

her. But she cut me short by saying she must go and prepare a posset for Master Miles, and read the evening lessons from the Bible in his chamber to my mother. She did not invite me to follow her, so I refrained from doing so, and went about amongst my poor neighbours till dark, and visited one or two of the near-lying farms.

As I expected, I found many short of provisions, the hungry troop of Cromwell's men having laid hands on bread and meat, and poured gallons of cider and ale down their throats. I ordered the housewives to be at the Manor early on the next morning, and I would have supplies ready for their children, so long as our own held out.

It was the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, and, in Master Miles's sick chamber, with my mother and old Ursula and myself for gossips, Katharine was baptised by our old friend and minister. A holy silence followed, and if ever the presence of the angels was felt it was in the calm of the room. Sweet in my memory is that solemn hour, sweet and dear. And after receiving of the Holy Communion from those aged, trembling hands we went on our way, refreshed and strengthened.

No bells sounded for prayer on that Sunday. The words of our beautiful liturgy were not heard

within those sacred walls, where, with some few of the village folk, who went out of curiosity, the man set up in the place of Master Miles preached against the wiles of Satan and Popery, and prayed for the destruction of all the enemies of humble, unadorned worship, that they might be brought out of Egyptian darkness into life, for otherwise great would be their damnation.

Oh! cruel, bitter creed, which, satisfied with the salvation, as they say, of their own souls, teaches men to condemn as lost sinners all who see a more excellent way—the way of charity, which believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Verily, amidst all the changes and chances of this mortal life, love remaineth when all else fails.

I remained at my own home for that week to see how matters could be arranged for the comfort of Master Miles. He had rallied somewhat, and the country surgeon, who made his rounds in this district at intervals, said that the old man, so carefully tended, might last for some time longer. He brought news from the neighbourhood that several churches had been despoiled, and, questioning about Penshurst, said he thought the Parliament men stood somewhat

in awe of the Earl of Leicester, and that they would not attack the church, at least for some time.

I rode back to Penshurst without having approached the subject to my cousin, which was, nevertheless, deep hidden in my heart. She had a wonderful power of holding me off from it. There was about her something which, like the little hand she raised when that forward captain of the troop tried to lessen the distance between them, forbade anything which savoured of aught but the friendship which might exist as between good comrades, such as is seen between brother and sister.

I meditated much on Katharine, and with some satisfaction remembered that the stiff-backed Quaker Josiah, who my mother said had again urged his suit, had now no chance with a member of the Church. Since the day when that solemn service had been held in Master Miles's room, Katharine had been blythe and even gay, cheering my mother, tending the old man with gentle care, and always ready for some little pleasantry or jest about the very solemn and sad-faced personage who reigned now in the Rectory. Happy will he be who wins her, I thought; and then, remembering how I had loved unworthily one who had been false from first to last,

I felt I was scarce worthy to possess one who was pure as the driven snow, and clear as the crystal stream which meandered by my side as I pursued my way to Penshurst.

It will not be needful for me to write here any lengthened account of the next few months. They passed peacefully, and my dear mistress was, though yet very frail, in stronger health than when we came to Penshurst, and the company of the bright and clever Lady Isabella Sidney did much to cheer her.

She was a very skilful musician, and was pleased to approve my poor attempts on the mandolin, and to play with me in concert, which, with a voice accompanying us, made a very sweet harmony.

There was at this time a very young nephew of the Earl's, my Lord Strangford, at Penshurst, who fell into the most fervid love for Lady Isabella. His suit was not favoured, owing to his extreme youth, and my lord judged rightly, as after events proved, that he was not of the stuff which he desired for a husband of his beautiful daughter.

We had the great Yule log burning on the hearth at Christmas in the big hall, and a whole sheep was roasted, and games and merriment went on amongst the large household. The Princess came to the head

of the stairs which led from the hall up to the private chambers, and watched for a few minutes; then, turning away, put her hand into Lady Sunderland's, whose eyes were full of tears, as she recalled how merrily her own little Harry would have disported himself in that throng, who were playing Snap Dragon and other Christmas games—the Duke of Gloucester, under Master Lovel's charge, the gayest of the gay.

I was in attendance on the Princess, and I heard her say to Lady Sunderland,—

"Methinks the dead are soon forgot!"

"Nay, they yet live in faithful hearts, dear Princess; but well I know what is present to you and to me. My child, and the King, your father, the light of our eyes, gone from us! But I would not have my Harry back, for troubles are yet rife, and we have not seen the end of them; and for my elder children I have anxious thoughts, while for Harry I have none. He is safe with God."

Rumours of these Christmas feasts and of many other matters reached those who had usurped the supreme power in the land, and one day in spring of this year, 1650, we being assembled in the big hall for dinner, about one o'clock, a great bustle was heard in the courtyard, and a clatter of horses'

hoofs and voices raised in high tones. The royal children, the Princess and her brother, were seated at a board on the highest step of the daïs at the end of the hall, gentlemen in attendance, of whom I was one, standing behind their chairs. On the second step another board was spread, at which sat the Countess of Leicester, Lady Sunderland and the Ladies Sidney.

Now all eyes were turned to the door, and one of the porters appeared, calling out,—

"One Master Lenthal demands an audience—"

But, before the words were well out of his mouth, another voice was heard,—

"The Speaker of the House of Commons is here, to inquire into certain matters," and immediately there appeared Master Lenthal, with close-shaved head covered with the skull-cap the Puritans affected, in his long black gown and thick linen collar, on which last rested his chin, and over which his long peaked nose drooped as a parrot's might.

To this hour I can smile to recall the scene that followed.

The Countess rose from her seat, and, making a curtsey, asked in a clear voice.

"To what do I owe the honour of your visit, Master Speaker?"

"I come," said Master Lenthal, in a nasal, twanging voice, "by order of the House of Commons, to inquire into the condition of Elizabeth Stuart and her brother, Henry Stuart."

"In sooth, sir, I can soon satisfy your curiosity. I am proud to say Her Highness the Princess Elizabeth and His Highness the Duke of Gloucester are in good health, as you may observe, if you cast your eyes on yonder table, where they are at dinner. What further do you desire?"

All this time Lenthal had not made the slightest movement of his bullet head, nor removed his cap. Now he snarled out,—

"There be other matters which I desire to discuss with you; but mayhap I had best do so with the master of this place, one Robert Sidney."

"You must delay that discussion, sir; my husband the Earl is now absent. I stand in his stead, and I will not say he would give you a more cordial welcome than I do. Now that you have satisfied yourself by observation of the condition of their Highnesses, I would not forget my courtesy as hostess, and bid you sit down at the board yonder, with your followers, for such refreshment as you need, before you take to your horses and ride back again whence you came."

"Such insolence will not pass unnoticed by the House of Commons, of which I am the unworthy representative," said Master Lenthal.

"Insolence! forsooth, do you dare to say as much to me! methinks yours is the insolence, to thrust yourself into this Hall—unasked and undesired—to act as spy in the household of a nobleman and his lady, who have these royal children in their keeping."

A sinister smile broke over Lenthal's face.

"Direct disobedience to orders," he began.

"To what orders, prythee; to whose orders do you refer?"

"To the orders of the great assembly of the House of Commons, who strictly commanded that Elizabeth Stuart, and Henry, her brother, should be treated as became their position."

"And so I will take care they are treated!" the Countess said. "Inquire of them yourself as to this —they can speak for themselves."

"It is idle to shift the question," Lenthal said. "In direct opposition to the order of the Parliament, I see these children seated by themselves, apart from your household, aye, and apart from your children, with lacqueys in waiting behind their chairs. In the name of the Parliament, I request, nay, I command,

that henceforth Elizabeth Stuart and Henry Stuart be brought down to sit at the common board with the rest."

"And you think, sir, that I am to be bidden in my own house, where I choose to place those who live under my roof. Nay, Master Speaker, you are come to the wrong woman, if you think she will submit to such barefaced impertinence."

"So be it," was the reply; "if you repent that obstinacy, do not lay it to my charge."

"To your charge! yes, I do lay it to your charge; and if such as you bear rule over this unhappy realm, I foretell even worse times for it."

"This comes with an ill grace from the mother of Algernon Sidney and Philip Lisle," Lenthal said, with a sneer.

"Hold! sir, nor twit me with the divisions in my family; it is of a piece with the rest, and unless you make your exit speedily, I will look to those of my gentlemen who will help you to do so."

"Ere I depart, I will see the chambers where Elizabeth Stuart and her brother are lodged, that I may report on them. If there be needless frippery, and embroidered cushions and the like, these are to be exchanged for more suitable appointments. And I see on yonder table silver goblets and platters,

which must be removed, and suitable wooden ones be laid in their place."

"Hear him!" the Countess said. "Hear him!" impatiently stamping her feet. "Nay, sir; I will not be ordered by you as to the appointments of my own house. Moreover, I call those present to witness, that it was by express consent of the Parliament, on whose authority you pretend to speak, that all things suited for the royal children were removed from Whitehall hither, and here such goods and chattels will remain, while these children are under the roof of Dorothy, Countess of Leicester; I have no more to say."

Whereupon the Countess seated herself at her own table again, and seemingly paid no heed to a long harangue which Lenthal made as to the judgment which would fall upon the Countess, who had in so unseemly a fashion set at nought the commands of the House of Commons.

Then, Master Lenthal, with the air of a whipped dog, gathering his black gown closer over his lean person, stalked down the Hall, followed by the two or three attendants who had entered with him. Titters and ill-repressed laughter greeted him as he passed, and when he reached the door he turned, saying,—

"I cast the dust off my feet as a testimony against this house, leaving it and those to whom it belongs to the just judgment of the Lord of Hosts."

Hisses and groans broke forth, and were only quelled by my lady raising her hand and saying, in a clear ringing voice,—

"Hold, that is enough. The intruders are gone, and no need to think further of them nor their conduct. But be they who they may, no Sidney can forget due courtesy, even to a foe." And therefore she said to one of the servants,—"Go and fill some cups with ale, and give to the followers of Master Lenthal—and give him a goblet of wine, ere he mounts his horse."

During this scene the Princess had shown evident signs of distress, and she could not be prevailed upon to touch the food before her.

"They will take us away," she murmured sorrowfully. "I know they will, and we shall be committed to men harsh and cruel, men who will make our lives burdensome."

Soon after this visit of Lenthal's, the Princess lost what ground she had gained, and ceased to take delight in her studies, except the Bible, under Master Lovel, and would sit without speaking for hours

together, but always pleased when the Lady Isabella brought her viol, and played and sang with the accompaniment of my mandolin, and at times of my voice.

Nothing was wanting in the care Lady Leicester took of the Princess, and she never entered the room but a bright smile illumined the pale sweet countenance which was turned towards her with an unspoken welcome.

The Princess was not harassed with the rumours that from time to time reached Penshurst, or of schemes for the future. They were kept from her as much as possible, but after Lenthal's visit, she gave up all hope of remaining at Penshurst, and said she knew full well that the Parliament would lay plots to remove her and her brother.

For some time no more was heard of the complaints the Speaker had made as to the treatment of the Princess; but in the summer of this same year, Charles the Second—the late King's eldest son—landed in Scotland, and a panic followed amongst the Commons. It was evident that the royal cause had many partizans, and the presence of the royal children within the limits of the commonwealth was considered dangerous.

In spite of all precautions, the Duke of Gloucester

got the news of his brother's landing, and burst in boyish fashion into the room where his sister was, calling out,—

"Long live King Charles the Second!"

The Princess started up and put her hand to her side, and then sank back again saying,—

"Ah! Henry, how you startled me. Master Lovel," she said, "tell me what he means."

Then Master Lovel bade the Duke be less boisterous, and told the Princess that her brother had landed, and it might be that his cause would triumph.

For a moment these eyes were lighted with sweet hope, and the Princess said,—

"Then, it may be, better times are in store,"—but presently sinking back, she said, with a sad smile,—"Not for me, or rather, should I say, the best will be for me where my father wears that incorruptible crown of which he spoke to Bishop Juxon."

We were all kept in suspense for some days. The Earl of Leicester came hastily to Penshurst and told how the matter of the royal children's maintenance had been before Parliament, and they were to be removed to the Isle of Wight for safe keeping, and beyond the limits of the commonwealth.

"Nought remains for us," the Earl said, "but to resign our charge," but the Countess was loath to do so, and even spoke of resistance.

"This is mere folly," the Earl said; "we have, alas! no power whatever against these men. Be thankful that the scheme for their being under the dominion of Cromwell has fallen to the ground. That was discussed, and that the Duke should be taught brewing as a trade. They are, at least, saved that indignity. Preparations must at once be made, and with as good a grace as maybe, and to spare the tender feelings of the Princess, let us put a good face on it."

Sensible advice was this, but the Countess found it hard to follow. So dearly did she love the gentle Princess who had won her heart, that an affection flowed forth to her which was motherly in its tenderness.

The orders for the removal of the Princess and the Duke were brought by one Master Anthony Mildmay, who was the brother of the Governor of Carisbrooke Castle. These orders were very strict, and I feared that the change made in the Princess's household would necessitate my being dismissed, but, by the good offices of the Earl of Leicester, I was

retained amongst the few attendants that were now allowed the Princess.

The Duke's title was taken away, and he and his sister were to be henceforth treated as the children of private gentlemen—the Duke styled Master Harry—the Princess, Lady Elizabeth.

All was now bustle and confusion at Penshurst. The packing and removal of the furniture was a work of several days, and two large waggons were filled with what was now the property of the State, and Lady Leicester had no choice but to deliver it up.

It was on the evening but one before we left Penshurst, that I, being with the Princess in the chamber overlooking the pleasance, heard from her lips many words that can never be forgot. I had played at her request for some time when she said,—

"Put down the mandolin, good Master Blount, and let me speak of some things which are in my heart." She was then pleased to say I had been a source of consolation to her with the music I made, and she hoped when her brother was King I should be remembered.

"Indeed, you have rendered good service, and those who love the memory of the King my father,

must needs bear in mind that you were wounded in his cause in the Battle of Newbury.

"I feel now my time is short, and if aught could tend to take away what little strength remains, it would be this cruel removal to a place of which I shudder to think. The very spot where they imprisoned my father, and whence they led him to his death, there is no place under the sun from which I turn with such dread and loathing as Carisbrooke Castle; but," she added, with one of her sweetest smiles, "God's will must be done, and He is above all, though, when I think of the churches of the land, like yours, Master Blount, laid desolate and defaced, and the prayers of the Liturgy no longer offered, I marvel how it is that God can suffer these men to triumph. Only for a time—only for a time, and you, Master Blount, will see happier days."

She was silent then for a few minutes, but with her accustomed thought for those who served her, she said,—

"You would fain bid farewell to your mother and cousin. Will you not go to-morrow to do so?"

"I saw them but recently," I replied; "when we laid Master Miles in his grave. I will not again leave your Highness. Master Lovel has much for me to arrange with books and papers, and there

will be scarce a moment to spare on the morrow, the last day of our sojourn at Penshurst."

"The last day," the Princess repeated. "I love Penshurst. See how fair the pleasance looks! How the shadows of the trees lie athwart the turf. At times, when I think of heaven, I question whether it can be fairer than these woods and lawns and groves of which Master Jonson has so well sung in praise."

I could but mark the look on the Princess's face; once the words had risen to my lips "perfect through suffering," now I could only think of the words which had been read by Mr. Lovel that day at matins, "meet to be an inheritor of the saints in light."

The parting was very sorrowful. The Princess clung to the Countess of Leicester, who seemed on her part scarce able to let her go.

At last the stern voice of Sir Anthony Mildmay, who stood by, recalled the Countess to what was inevitable.

"Lady Elizabeth," Sir Anthony said, "the coach waits; enter it with no further delay."

Lady Mildmay then took the Princess's hand as if to lead her away. But the Princess drew back, and brushing away her tears, seemed at once to

recover her dignity, and, without another word, walked slowly towards the coach where the Duke was already placed. Lady Mildmay followed, and Sir Anthony mounting his horse to ride alongside of the cumbrous vehicle, the children were borne away from Penshurst Castle, to exchange consideration of their rank, and loving care, for the stiff rule of Sir Anthony and his wife, who were, as we know, well paid for the charge they had undertaken.

The attendants of the Princess and the Duke then followed the ladies in a coach, the gentlemen on horseback; I riding abreast with Master Lovel.

Looking back, as we raised our caps in token of respectful farewell, I saw the Countess was weeping bitterly, as she stood under the archway of the courtyard, with her daughters and the children of Lady Sunderland beside her.

It was a sad scene, and Master Lovel might well say,—"I fear me, as far as the Princess is concerned, this is for her the last act in the pitiful story of her young life." The physician had little hope of her long continuance on earth, and how could we desire it; and yet I did desire it, for I could never cease to think the restoration of the family of the King would come, and his children be re-instated in their rightful place. I hoped against hope; blind-

ing my eyes to the visible decrease of strength in the Princess, which was only too apparent, and dreaming of a coming day when she would shine in the court of her brother. Foolish dreams they were, and, even as I indulged them, I knew it.

The journey, begun on the tenth day of August, was not ended till the thirteenth. We had many stoppages, resting at night at hostels, where the comfort of the Princess was but scantily provided for.

The Princess said but little, bearing herself with dignity, and never allowing Lady Mildmay to approach her with any familiarity. She shed no more tears, and was calm and uncomplaining.

The young Duke was full of spirit, the journey was all novelty to him, and when he went on board the ship at Southampton, he was as merry and jocund as if he were treated with the respect due to the Duke of Gloucester, and not chidden continually as Master Harry by Sir Anthony Mildmay for boisterous conduct.

The day favoured us, the gentle wind filled the sails as the ship bounded over the blue waters of the Solent Sea. Snowy gulls flew hither and thither about the prow, and the Duke was delighted to feed them with morsels of hard-baked bread which one of the sailors gave him.

The Princess sat on deck watching her brother with a sad smile. "Poor Harry!" she said once, "he might be sailing to France to our mother, he looks so happy, and it is best for him to be so light-hearted—it is well some hearts can be light, Master Blount. For my part, I should be well content to go on sailing thus for days, provided Carisbrooke were not at the end of the voyage. The very thought of that place makes me shudder. Can I forget all the King my father suffered there? Can I forget the humiliation and dismay, when they bore him a prisoner over these very waters to meet a cruel death?"

What could be said to comfort her? Master Lovel turned away with tears in his eyes. As for me, I took my viol at her bidding, and sang, as best I could, a song I knew she loved:—

"See, athwart yonder cloud,
'Erstwhile all dark and drear,
A radiant bow is seen
All drest in fairest sheen
Of purple gold and tender green,
A fleeting glory, yet how dear.

"See, athwart clouds of sorrow
Flashes a ray of light,
Seen through a mist of tears,
To lay to rest our fears,
As promise of future years,
As message of a fair and bright to-morrow."

"Yes," the Princess said, "yes, Master Blount, a fair and bright to-morrow, but not in this life for me. Nay, do not look so sad, the sadness will soon be over now."

It was not till the thirteenth day of August that we passed the gloomy gateway of Carisbrooke Castle.

The sound of the horses' hoofs was hollow on the courtyard, under which, as we discovered, was a dungeon. It was a dark afternoon, and rain began to fall, and the hoarse cry of some rooks going was heard overhead as we waited to be admitted.

The Governor, Sir Henry Mildmay, stood with the keys of the castle in his hand to receive the two children. He had a very sombre aspect, and putting the formal question of "Who comes here?" Sir Anthony answered.

"By order of the Parliament, I bring you, as Governor of this Castle of Carisbrooke, Lady Elizabeth Stuart and her brother, Mr. Henry Stuart, to be under your care and protection, till such time as the Parliament require them to be given up into their hands."

The Governor bowed, saying,—

"I obey the orders of the Parliament, and pro-

ceed to conduct Elizabeth Stuart and her brother to the chambers appointed for their use."

The Princess made not the faintest sign of hearing what passed, but, taking her brother's hand, said, in that voice which surely was enough to melt a heart of stone,—

"Come, Henry, let us seek rest after the long journey."

Then, with a stately bow to the Governor, she passed on to the foot of a stone staircase, where she paused, and, turning, said,—

"Suffer my ladies and gentlemen to follow me, sir."

"I must first show you the way," was the reply, and the Governor stepped past the Princess, and began to ascend the stairs.

It did not escape my notice, nor that of Master Lovel that the iron gate of the Castle was closed with a grating sound, and that the oak door, thickly studded with nails, was locked and barred, and there could be no longer any doubt that we were prisoners.

Arrived at the part of the castle where we were to live, we found it bare of any of those comforts with which the Princess had been so well supplied at Penshurst, but she bore it all with quiet patience,

and when one of the women began to rave loudly against this treatment of a royal Princess, she rebuked her, saying,—

"It will serve no good purpose to speak with such heat; nay, rather, it will enrage them who are set over us."

After a quiet Sunday, when the services of the Church for morning and evening prayer were read by Master Lovel, the Princess seemed to revive greatly, and so remained through the week. On the Monday, the twenty-second day of August, she said to the Duke,—

"We will play bowls to-day, Henry, and maybe I shall come off victor."

"I am right glad to hear you will play, sister, for you have looked as if you would never play a game again since we came hither." And the child ran off gladly to get the bowls, calling on us all to come and watch the play.

We were never wholly unobserved by the people instructed to keep guard over us. Sometimes Sir Anthony would pace up and down, or Lady Mildmay would be seated on a bench overlooking the bowling-green, or the Governor would come and enter into conversation with Master Lovel, and sometimes with me.

To-day the Princess exerted herself greatly, and one of the ladies went to beg her not to heat herself too much, but to stop the game.

She had scarcely spoken when a heavy shower of rain fell, and as the bowling-green was some distance from her rooms we were all well wetted before we reached them. The consequences were such as we dreaded for the Princess. A sort of intermittent fever set in, not with any great violence, but enough to make her more languid than usual.

"I can play no more bowls till I am better," she said to her brother; "but there are others who will do so. Do not tease me further, Henry."

The boy was greatly disappointed, but after a promise that she would play as soon as the pain in her head was gone, he was pacified.

The bowling-green having been made for the King during his stay at Carisbrooke, was a favourite resort of the Princess.

"I use to think of my deceased father, striving to forget his heavy troubles while at the game he could play so well. This is why I have got to love it."

"I fear the exercise is too violent for you, Lady Elizabeth," Lady Mildmay said, "and I must forbid it, at any rate for the present."

"As you will," the Princess said, in a weary tone, "as you will; I do not rebel against an order that is meant for my good."

Lady Mildmay was a stiff and cold-hearted woman, but even she could scarce resist the sweetness and submission which the Princess showed.

She bent down, and taking one of the little hot hands in hers, kissed it, saying,—

"You are ever ready to obey orders, and be sure none are given without a reason."

The Princess did not answer, but turned her head away with a sad smile, asking one of the ladies to put a cold bandage on her forehead where the pain was seated.

No means were neglected, and doctors were called in from Newport. One Dr. Bagnall had scant hope from the first, and, at Sir Anthony Mildmay's request, an express messenger was sent to London to consult Sir Theodore Mayerne, who knew the delicate constitution of the Princess.

He did not come in person, excusing himself on the score of his eighty years, but he sent several doctors, and a whole case full of prescriptions, none of which were of any service.

And soon we all knew that the end drew near, and surely those who were privileged to see the

Princess in her last hours learned how those who live near to God in life find Him near in death. I had speech with her for the last time on the day before she died.

I was summoned, by her request, to sing a few verses from one of the Psalms to the viol. This had often been my custom, and that seventh evening of the month provided words which were better than any which man could speak. For had not the beloved Princess, in all the change and chances of her brief life, delighted in the Lord, and committed her way to Him. Had she not held still in the Lord, and abode patiently in Him. She had the peace which came of keeping innocency, and taking heed of the thing which was right, and, verily, she had peace *at the last,* and God was her strength in the time of trouble.

When I stopped, the Princess turned to me with a sweet smile.

"I thank you, Master Blount," she said, "the next music I hear will be in Heaven. You have served me well, as you served my dear father well, and I pray God to bless you."

Master Lovel was at one end of the apartment with Lady Mildmay, and this lady now came over and told me to leave the chamber, summoning one

of the women to hold a cup of medicine to the Princess's lips. It was nauseous, and she shook her head.

"It can do no good now," she said; "spare me, I pray you."

"We trust it may yet revive you, dear Lady Elizabeth; it is physic sent by Sir Thomas Mayerne. Drink it to satisfy and please us."

Then the Princess made no further objections, but, taking the cup, swallowed the contents with difficulty, whispering,—

"I would fain do as you desire, *to please you.*"

It was ever the same with the Princess, meek obedience and constant desire to please others had been the rule of her saint-like life. Then Lady Mildmay said,—

"Say your adieux to Lady Elizabeth, Master Blount."

I knelt by the bed, and the Princess gave me her hand, saying,—

"You will see Penshurst again, beautiful Penshurst; be sure to convey my last remembrances to the Countess. I have bequeathed memorials of my love to her, which, I hope, will be delivered safely. Say to the Countess, the memory of Penshurst is with me to the end, and I loved to be there. If

God had willed it so, I should have been well pleased to die there."

I felt my courage fast giving way, and tears were wetting the hand I held, and covered with kisses. In silence I left her, my dearly loved and honoured mistress, and it was many a day before I again touched the strings of the viol, not being able to endure the sound, now she who had loved it would hear it no more.

There was an extraordinary feeling throughout the Castle about the Princess. Everyone moved quietly, and spoke in low tones.

The doctors went to and fro, consulting together; but, on Sunday morning, all hope was over. Master Lovel read the prayers of the Church for the sick in the small ante-chamber opening from the Princess's; and the greater part of the household were present. Those who absented themselves were the Puritans, to whom the Liturgy of the Church was distasteful. Heaven forgive and help such, it is to their own loss!

I looked once more through the door upon my mistress; she lay with a holy calm on her face, but her breath fluttered, and grew faint and fainter as the day wore on. Restless and sad I wandered

hither and thither, and turned my steps to the bowling-green, the place where the Princess had last been seen abroad. I had not slept for some nights, and seating myself on a bench, I suppose I dozed, and, may be, I dreamed, but I never can be sure that it was a dream or a waking vision. This question does not trouble me, but this I do know, for I made an entry of it in my journal on that very evening, which runs as follows,—

"Overcome with grief, and so exhausted with the long sleepless hours of two previous nights, I resorting to the bowling-green in the afternoon of September the eighth, 1650, and, seated on a bench, saw the figure of the Princess Elizabeth, all in pure white, crossing the turf of the bowling-green. Her step was light as air, her beautiful hair flowing in the gentle breeze. As she came towards the spot where I sat, she looked not at me, but far beyond me, her face shining with what seemed a smile of welcome to one whom I could not see. Presently she stretched out her arms, and I thought I heard her say, 'Father—father—' I started up, and at that very moment the big clock of the Castle struck three. So distinct was the vision I had seen, that I looked in all directions, as if sure of seeing the Princess. I stood as one amazed, and, going

towards the Castle, was met by one of the Princess's attendants,—she was weeping bitterly.

"'Master Blount,' she exclaimed, 'Master Blount, the Princess is gone; just as the clock struck three she drew her last breath. Alack! alack!'

"'A saint is gone from earth, and another angel is taken to heaven,' I said."

On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, in a coach borrowed for the purpose—the Princess's body, having been embalmed, was placed; a little band of those who loved and served her followed her—our White King's daughter, to her last resting place at Newport. The golden sunshine of September illumined the letters on the simple coffin, wherein lay all that was mortal of our sweet mistress. Her name, and the day of her death, were inscribed on it, showing that she was the second daughter of the late King Charles the First, and we who passed sorrowfully away could yet bless God that she was taken from the evil to come. No royal pomp attended the burial of this daughter of a King. Even as her father was laid to rest from the strife and bitterness of his troubled life, so in silence and tears was this, his dearly loved child, laid in the Chapel of St. Thomas, in the parish church of Newport.

The little Duke of Gloucester stood as chief mourner, strangely quiet, and with a far-away look upon his young face, which many besides myself noticed, and remembered in after days, when he too, in the flower of his youth, was taken hence—to join—who can doubt it!—the sister of his early childhood where their father had gone before.

I did not remain long at Carisbrooke after the Princess's death. Sir Anthony Mildmay told me I was not wanted, for the Princess's attendants were to be dismissed, except Master Lovel, who would remain till orders came concerning the Duke of Gloucester from the Parliament. I had no mind to remain, my work was over now, and I took ship at Cowes on the twenty-ninth of September—the Angel's Day—and set me off on my journey homewards, feeling a great longing to see my mother and my cousin Katharine, and relate to them the events of the last few months since we parted. I hired a horse at Southampton, and, after a somewhat tiring and sad journey, I drew near my home in the fading light of a still October evening.

The village seemed more quiet than was its wont, and not a sound broke the stillness.

Arrived at the old stone gateway of my house, I pushed aside the door, which was closed, and

went up to the porch. No one was stirring, and the shutters of the parlour were closed. I passed round to the back of the house, and entered the kitchen.

Old Robin sat there crouching over the dying embers of the fire, and Ursula on the settle opposite. Hearing footsteps, Ursula started, and cried out,—

"Master Jocelyn! or is it his ghost?"

"No, I am flesh and blood; but why are you all so quiet, where are my mother and Mistress Danby?"

"Oh, bless my heart, don't you know. The blessed mistress died a week agone. Dear! dear! didn't you get the letter Mistress Katharine wrote?"

"No," I said, "no," and struck by this unlooked-for blow, I staggered against the wall, and could scarce find words to ask when and how my mother had died.

"Let me see Mistress Danby," I asked; for though Ursula and old Robin began to talk both at once, giving me particulars which were all confused, and by their want of teeth, hardly to be understood, I wanted to hear more details from Katharine.

"Let me see Mistress Danby," I repeated, going

towards the door leading from the kitchen to the dwelling-house.

"See her! see her! That you can't; she is gone, too!"

"Gone?" I repeated. "Dead?"

"No, no, no; not dead, but off in the stage waggon, as soon as the blessed mistress was laid in her grave yesterday, bag and baggage, and with a face as white and sorrowful as ever I looked upon. We prayed her to tarry, but she only shook her head. We bade her, at any rate, delay till you came, but she was always one to have her own way, and you might as well try to turn the church tower as Mistress Danby. She was at her pen next day, and there's a letter for you in the parlour. There! don't take on, Mr. Jocelyn. I'll come and open the shutters, for that wench Milley is out making holiday, and Master Browne has not been near us to-day. He don't take much heed of us, poor old folk, though we have been faithful servants for many a long year."

Muttering and murmuring this, and much more, we reached the parlour, which was in darkness, save where, through a chink in the shutter, a line of light fell on the shelf where lay the books I had known from childhood. That ray of sunlight rested on the

white packet on the shelf, which proved to be my cousin's letter.

Old Ursula made feeble attempts to lift the bars across the shutters. I somewhat impatiently thrust her aside, and soon the sun, just piercing the gloomy clouds, flooded the darkened parlour with light. I tore open the packet, and read as follows, word for word, taken from the faded sheet lying before me:—

"COUSIN JOCELYN,—I had no time to warn you of the failing strength of your mother. On the evening of the twenty-sixth day of last month, September, I, going to her chamber to see her well laid for the night, found her on her knees by the bed—her hands clasped in prayer, and on her face a strange light. Of late she had been quite blind, and her eyes now had a look upwards, and her lips smiling as if she saw a fair vision. Doubtless, she did see what I, holding her in my arms, saw not.

"With a word on her lips, your name and, I think, your father's, her spirit passed to the light of God—that light which, as the faith of my people holds fast—lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

"The whole village, and many neighbours and

friends, surrounded the grave. There I stood, the only one of her kindred, at the head. The minister forbade the use of the burial service, but ere she was borne from the house, I, knowing her love for that service, and having ofttimes heard her lament it could not be read over the remains of your father —went through it as best I could, with old Robin and Ursula, and those to whom you entrusted the affairs of the estate, standing by.

"I would fain have had you by me, but it was not to be. I despatched a letter to you on the day of your mother's death, but it cannot, I well know, reach you before I leave this house.

"Now, Cousin Jocelyn, I bid you farewell. As far as in me lies, I have left all things in order. My future is uncertain. I could scarce take my place in my step-father's house now that I am in union with the Church. It would but stir up rancour and bitterness, and this would be painful.

"My mother is dead, and I have no duty to call me to Tunbridge Wells. I am not afraid; I have committed my way to God. Farewell, Jocelyn.—I rest, your true friend and cousin.

"KATHARINE DANBY."

Again and again I read the letter, and every time I did so, I became more hopeless as to persuading Katharine to return. Nay, how could I persuade her, when I knew nought of her, where she was, or where to find her.

A feeling of desolation and utter hopelessness swept over me like a flood. I was alone, and the presence for which I longed was denied me.

The mother who had loved me so well had gone from my sight; the dutiful service I would have rendered her in her last hours denied me; and that other service, for which I had left her, with her blessing, it is true, no longer needed, for my most dear mistress, the Princess, was taken from this troublesome world.

Like a man stranded on a barren shore, I walked to and fro in the silent empty rooms, and through the pleasance and gardens, hungry for the sound of a familiar voice, or the kindly pressure of a friendly hand.

It is true my people were respectful, and showed every desire to do their duty by me. A few neighbours and friends, on hearing of my arrival at my desolate home, came to offer sympathy, and also to hear what I had to tell of the death of the Princess Elizabeth.

They made lamentation over the state of the Church and parish under the sway of the stiff Puritan who had succeeded good and gentle Master Miles.

He had frightened a few, by the terrors of the law, to join in his long services, to eschew all that was bright and joyful, and to persuade them that to wear a sad countenance and don ugly garments was acceptable to the Lord.

Who can marvel, that after years of this iron rule in the Church and Kingdom, when the relief came, and the King was restored, there was a bounding back to lamentable license, and disregard of all that was lovely and of good report.

I can fancy I hear the voice of my wife, as I write, warning me that I am growing dull and tedious, and that I ought to wind up this history without further reflections on the bigotry of the narrow Puritans, or the undue license of those who followed them.

Let me then shortly sum up and have done.

BOOK V.

Be the day weary, or be the day long,
At last it ringeth for Even Song.

BOOK V.

EVEN SONG.

As this history was written chiefly for the setting forth of the beautiful character of the Princess Elizabeth, by her trials and sorrows so nobly borne, there is not much more in my journal which need be extracted and written here.

I pass over the years of my loneliness at Norbury Manor, varied now and again by a ride to Penshurst, where an unfailing welcome awaited me at all times. There were many changes there; the lovely sisters, the Ladies Sidney, in the bloom of their youth, were smitten by that fatal disease, consumption, and died in quick succession.

Divisions too, assailed the peace of the noble family; Algernon Sidney and his brother, Lord de Lisle, were strong partizans of Cromwell, who was soon in the zenith of his short-lived power.

My Lady Leicester showed signs of age creeping

on her; and my Lord felt bitterly the changes which were wrought under the iron rule of the Protector, and was heavy-hearted and sad.

As to my own little concerns, I may say I made all enquiries possible for my Cousin Katharine, riding over again and again to Tunbridge to try to gain news from her stepfather.

I met with no success, hearing only that this rigid Quaker had renounced one who had allied herself to the half Popish Church, "now happily no longer," as he said, "the Church of the country," and given herself over to will worship and dark superstition. It was possible, he said, that Katharine was with a relative of her dead mother's in London, but he knew not where she lived, nor, he added, did he greatly care to know.

So the years passed by, those years of loneliness in which I did my utmost to look after the affairs of my small estate, see to the better cultivation of the land, and improve the breed of horses and cattle under Browne, my steward's management. Thus I whiled away the time in the day, and in the evenings I took up my old studies and tried to find delight in my books, and by degrees I took up my long silent viol and mandolin, and once again woke melody from them.

A fever caught from a poor man stricken with it, whom I had visited, in the village, laid me low in the third spring after my return from the Isle of Wight. I was brought very near to death, and I have but a dim memory of that time of sickness. I knew that old Ursula did her best for me, and was jealous of any one but herself coming near me. I knew that the minister came and poured out long prayers by my bed, that only seemed like the moaning of the wind in the tree tops, or the less pleasant sound of the grating of the barn door on its hinges. Then came a day, when, leaving my bed, I crept downstairs, and with Ursula's help reached the parlour, where the spring sunshine made its way through the casement, and the love of life sprang up in me—that love of life which God has implanted in our hearts, and thus it must be right to cherish it. I looked round on all the familiar objects, at my mother's empty chair, at the corner where Katharine was wont to sit with her spinning-wheel, at the shelf holding my books, at the viol and mandolin resting against the wall. The lattice was open, the song of birds borne on the soft air came in with the fragrance of the flowers under the lattice. The sky above was blue, where snowy clouds sailed now and again, casting a passing shadow as

they veiled the sun. A marked day was this spring day to me, from it I date what I may well call a new life—a new existence. I closed my eyes, and lulled by the hum of bees and the drowsy low of the cows in my pasture, I fell asleep. That light day dream; that gentle slumber, after long weeks of restlessness and sickness, how sweet is it! I saw Katharine before me, as plainly as ever in my life, looking at me with pitying eyes, and as I started up to assure myself that it was only a dream, old Ursula came in with a letter in her hand.

"Brought by the waggon from Tunbridge," she said, "but sup your broth before you open it, for you have no more strength than a fly."

I saw the address, and knew the writing to be Katharine's. I cut the silk, and broke open the seal, and read,—

"COUSIN JOCELYN,—Tidings have reached me you are sick and may need some one to tend you. I am at Tunbridge and ready to come, if you desire it. Your true friend and kinswoman.—

"KATHARINE DANBY."

If I desired it. I tried to spring up that I might answer this letter in person, unheeding Ursula's reproaches, as I fell back exhausted.

"See," I said, "bid James saddle old Moll, and ride off post-haste to Tunbridge Wells, and deliver a letter at the house of one Master Preston, hard by the Crown Inn."

"Letter, you can't write a letter," Ursula grumbled; "you can't hold a spoon, let alone a pen."

"Give me paper and a pen instantly, and do my bidding; do you hear?"

"Hoity, toity! you are getting well; sick folks, when they are on the mend, always fly into tantrums."

But she fumbled about, and brought out a sheet of paper and the ink-horn, with a quill which no good penman could have made do much service.

I only wrote one word.

"Come.—J. B."

It was enough, a hundred words could not have done better. It brought her, my love, my sweetheart, the next day. I had dispatched Browne to a clergyman, who of late had been in a farm-house, and now and again by stealth had gathered together a few faithful to their church, to hear the Liturgy and administer the Holy Communion, and I asked him to hold himself in readiness to unite me in marriage with one I loved.

Then, in my weak condition, I was tortured with

fear, what if this was far from her intention. Was it only as a kinswoman and friend that she was willing to come? Yet I knew her too well to doubt that her goodness and knowledge of the fitness of things would show that she could not come to Norbury other than as my wife.

The moment I saw her at the door with her sweet face full of divine pity and love for me, all doubts vanished.

My Katharine put her hand in mine, and bending over me, said,—

"I am right glad to come, Jocelyn."

"To be my wife?" I asked.

"Yes, if so it please you."

"Why, why did you not come before, why did you ever go away?"

"Why? I was not sure you wanted me. I waited for a sign."

"Oh! Katharine, you might have known."

"Might I?" she said, with her arch smile; "and now as I am come you must obey me, and get strong and hearty, as fast as may be."

We despatched a messenger for the clergyman, and in the twilight of that fair May evening—1653—he came.

My bride had dressed herself with care, in white,

her hair veiled her slight tall figure, and on her breast was a knot of white roses.

There, in the presence of old Robin and Ursula and Browne, my steward, with his good wife and two near neighbours, Katharine and I were pronounced man and wife in the name of the Lord.

If I descanted further on the joy of that moment, and all the great happiness that has followed it, I should lay myself open to the rebuke of getting prosy, and that it was needless to indulge in writing here, what every one would take for granted without being told.

My Katharine was always bright and cheery, and her coming was like the coming of the sun into a darkened room. Yes, just as the sun flooded the parlour that May day, when, after many weeks I took my place there, so did my wife bring light into my hitherto somewhat sad life.

I found she had lived with a relation of her mother's in the Cheap, and that one of the apprentices, having an uncle at Tunbridge, and coming there to take up the business of a watch and clockmaker, had heard of my fever, and how I had caught it, and repeating it in a letter to his master's daughter, on whom he was casting his eye, in the hopes of winning her for his wife, the news had

reached Katharine, and the result was what I have described.

I have nearly done now; but I suppose, what was thought an event in my life of vast importance, should not be passed over in this history.

For myself, I do not think it to be near as worthy of record as the scene in my parlour in the twilight of the May evening of 1653.

It was, as everyone knows, in the May of 1660, that the King came to claim his own. The whole country was mad with delight; of this, and the feastings and rejoicings which followed, I need not write.

Every one who thinks at all, must have marked how even our little life, its joys, its griefs, its hopes and fears, are even to the most loyal subject of greater moment than public events, however important.

Thus, it came about, that when I was rejoicing in the birth of our eldest boy (whom, as I have said, God saw fit to take early from us), and proud of my new dignity, a message came from my Lady Sunderland, to the effect that all who had served in any way the late King, Charles I., should present themselves at Whitehall to do homage, and to receive, it might be, some mark of acknowledgment

for service done, from His present Majesty. My Lady Sunderland was so mindful of me, as to promise I should find quarters at her town house, and counselled me not to delay.

My Katharine urged me to do what Lady Sunderland advised. I begged her to accompany me, but she laughed at this notion, and said she had never been used to king's palaces, nor to have dealings with those who lived in them; but still she considered that, for our babe's sake, if my service was like to be requited by any tangible sign, I should present myself.

So, it fell out that, in the early days of the next year, 1667, I found myself once more in London, having ridden thither on a good horse, well-accoutred, and with Browne on another, as my servant.

I presented myself at Whitehall at the hour appointed by Lord Sunderland, and found crowds waiting for an audience. We were all sent in like a flock of sheep to the large ante-chamber, where the King was seated, General Monk by his chair, and a goodly crowd of nobles and gentlemen standing by.

The King's graciousness of manner, and his patience in receiving so many aspirants for his favour, were well worthy of notice. Many merely

did homage, and passed on towards a door behind the chair where His Majesty sat.

Lord Sunderland beckoned to me to come near him, and I stood aside, watching the faces of those who passed; for almost all, the King had a pleasant word and merry jest. Of some he was evidently doubtful, and to such he was cold and short in manner; knowing, it may be, their names, as amongst those who had been foremost in the late rebellion.

At length my turn came. Lord Sunderland said,

"This, your Highness, is one Master Jocelyn Blount, whose father fell at Newbury, fighting side by side with mine. He bears, as your Majesty sees, marks of that great fight—a bullet entering his thigh; he has halted on that leg ever since."

"Ah," the King said, "well, I'll warrant, though Blount was his name, his sword was sharp enough. Draw near, Master Blount," and the King gave me his hand to kiss.

I knelt as best I could. Then the King said,—

"Nay, it must be somewhat hard to bend that stiff knee; rise." And then, with a pretty sharp blow with the flat of his sword the King repeated, "Rise, Sir Jocelyn Blount."

I was taken by surprise, but I found words to say, still kneeling,—

"May it please your Majesty, however stiff my knee and however clumsy my gait, it is with a loyal heart I kneel to do honour to my Lord and Sovereign."

"Well spoken, well spoken," the King said; "but rise, Sir Jocelyn Blount, and be sure I forget no faithful service rendered to the King, my father, when many of those who had cause to love him left him in the hour of need."

"My young Lord Sunderland," the King said, turning to him, "we thank you for bringing this good gentleman hither."

Then my Lord said something in a low voice to the King, and he exclaimed,—

"Ha! is it so? a double service then. I find, Sir Jocelyn, you were a faithful servant also to my dearly loved and lost sister, the Princess Elizabeth; for this also we tender you thanks," and for the second time the King gave me his hand to kiss.

And then I knelt again and said,—

"May it please your Majesty, that poor service rendered to the best and sweetest of princesses will ever remain in my memory as the highest privilege I have ever known."

My somewhat lengthened audience with the King had caused impatience in those behind me, and I retired at a sign from my Lord Sunderland, and so left the presence chamber.

I had no mind to tarry long about the Court, though I had now free access to it.

Already there were signs of the vast change in manners and morals which the King's return to occupy the throne had brought about. He had always a welcome for all gentlewomen who had beauty or wit to recommend them, and I saw many bold faces, and heard much talk which was distasteful to me.

Once, when the King was dining in public, and the wine was flowing like water, and the hall was full of nobles and their fine ladies, I heard a voice near me raised in a high pitch and my name pronounced. Turning, I looked to discover who had spoken, and there, close to me, was a lady dressed in the far from modest fashion which had been brought from France, jewels and pearls adorning her bare neck, her cheeks painted, her eyebrows blackened, and curls so abundant, they must needs have been false, lying across her low bodice, exclaimed,—

"Do you not know me? Sure, I am not so changed that you have forgotten Henrietta Pole?"

o o o o o o

I knew her now, the wreck of her former self—the beautiful outline of features, and the turn of her swan-like neck remained, but what beside? She laughed a hollow, unreal laugh, and I found was attended by two or three idle fellows, one of whom asked,—

"Who may this gallant be, my Lady Pole?"

"An old friend," was the answer. "You may go your way. I must have speech with him. See, Sir Jocelyn, there is a quiet nook in yonder bay window out of the crowd, we can be safe there from observation."

I followed her, and heard the scoffing laugh of one of the gallants as I did so. To my surprise, when we had reached the place, where the projecting curve of the window shielded us from curious eyes, Lady Pole's manner changed.

"You did not know me, and no wonder; I am the most miserable woman in the world. I would give all this finery—these pearls and jewels, aye, and all I possess, to be once more what I was when you saw me first at Penshurst. Pity me, pray for me, Jocelyn, I am wretched, and sinful as wretched."

I was much moved. The vision of my home—my child, and the pure wife and mother, rose before

me, in sharp contrast to the unhappiness I saw on Lady Pole's face.

"It is never too late to turn from what is sinful. Where is Sir Evered?"

"I know not, and I care not," she replied. "We agreed to go each our own way, years agone, Jocelyn. The French Court is full of traps and snares. I fell into them, and I am, as I tell you, a miserable woman. I see you despise me. I see you turn from me—but what wonder?"

"I would fain save you from this life if it were in my power—but I do entreat you to come out of it—it is not too late."

"Not too late for *what?*" she asked, fixing her eyes on me, her still lustrous eyes, but shining with a far different light than of old.

"Not too late for *what?*" she repeated, coming nearer to me.

"To lead a good life, and return to your husband."

She laughed a shrill laugh then and said,—

"What an innocent you still are. Do you think my husband wants me; he would shut the door in my face, if I went near him. If that is all you have to say, I have done. Oh!" she continued in a mocking strain,—"how fares the Quaker cousin, with the

face like a nun and yet a saucy smile lurking on her prim lips, and twinkling in her eyes, as she saw you ride away by my side a dozen years ago—or is it a hundred years ago, I swear I don't know."

"My cousin is my honoured wife," I said, "the mother of my child. I return to my home to-morrow, and so I bid you farewell, my Lady Pole, praying you to turn, by God's help, to ways of pleasantness and peace."

"Peace! peace!" she said, "do not mock me, Jocelyn, I shall never know peace again."

And now one of the gallants came in sight, saying,—

"I have searched for you everywhere, my Lady Pole. They wait for you to take your place in a dance, which the King leads off; sure you have had enough of your friend's company. He cannot dance, I'll warrant."

She gave the man her hand, and as he led her away she looked back at me once more with a glance I can never forget, and so passed out of my sight for ever.

Many a man has I doubt not stood over the grave of his first love, but perhaps few have ever buried it with such profound pity as fell to my lot. For, indeed, the Henrietta Gower I had loved was

widely different from the Lady Pole with whom I had just spoken. And who could look on a fate like hers without sadness, for it did seem, indeed, as she said, *too late* for restoration. Yet who can tell? God knoweth. In His great mercy, no sinner, while life lasts, finds it too late for turning to Him with true repentance and tears.

I reached my home with a thankful heart two days later. As I rode into the village I heard the long-silent bell ringing from the old tower for Even Song, and, dismounting, I gave Browne the reins and entered the church. As I thought it would be, so it was. My wife was kneeling in her accustomed place, and the light of the western sun shone on her up-turned face. I went and knelt by her side till the last prayer was said and the blessing given.

For yet a few moments we knelt in silent prayer, which I knew, as a heritage of her Quaker worship, my Katharine loved. At last we passed out of the church, and I found a number of my people waiting by the old stone gate of Norbury Manor. Browne had spread the news that I had come home "Sir Jocelyn Blount," and when I appeared with Katharine on my arm, they raised a loud huzza.

"They are right glad to see you," my wife said,

and then I remembered Katharine did not know of my new honour.

In my happiness at being at home I had not hastened to tell her the news. Now I said,—

"Thank you, my good friends, for your welcome, in my own name, and in that of Lady Blount,—for the King has been pleased to honour me with knighthood in token of my father's service to the late King."

Katharine now spoke up in her clear voice,—

"And of your own service also. Is it not so, my friends? Sir Jocelyn well deserves it." And again a loud huzza broke forth, and our new clergyman, coming out from the church porch in his bands and cassock, joined the throng, and waving the cap he held in his hand, took part in the kindly greeting which my people gave me.

There are sunny places in men's lives, and this evening, when I sat with my wife in the enjoyment of our home, the child asleep in his cradle, is perhaps the sweetest memory in mine, as I look back on the days of my pilgrimage. Clouds arose, sorrows came, but love remained, and as I lay down my pen, I can say to my grandchild Joyce, and to those who shall come after me, as my parting word, that those who can love through the changes and

chances of this mortal life, hold the secret of happiness here and hereafter, for where love reigns, they may, by God's grace, taste of the fountain of love in His presence, remembering ever the warning of that knight *sans peur* and *sans reproche*,—

"All things pass away but the love of the God. See to it, then, that you love and fear God *above* all things."

at Norbury Manor

this Feast of the Annunciation

A.D. 1690.

JOCELYN BLOUNT, *Kt.*

THE END.

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